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### Alleged spy says he was 'Shin Bet victim'

AMMAN (AP) — A Palestinian expelled by Israel for allegedly spying for Iran denied on Monday links with the Islamic republic, saying he was the victim of a public relations stunt by Israel's security agency. Mohammad Rajab Salameh, 43 and holder of a doctorate in philosophy, also denied he had confessed to Israeli interrogators that he had links with the Iranian government "If I admitted to such charges, they would have tried and sentenced me there," he told the Associated Press, four days after Israeli authorities expelled him to Jordan. Security sources in Israel have said Mr. Salameh was suspected of having sent Iran maps marked with the locations of Israeli security facilities and ministries. Israel army radio said last week Mr. Salameh had not caused serious harm to the security of the Jewish state and that his deportation was a convenient way to close the case. But Mr. Salameh, speaking to the AP in his Amman apartment, accused Israel's security agency, Shin Bet, of using him "to cover up" its failure to protect Yitzhak Rabin.

### Holbrooke visit to Turkey, Greece stymied

ANKARA (AFP) — U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke on Monday cancelled this weekend's planned visit to Turkey after the Greek government announced that the official's planned talks in Athens would not take place, U.S. diplomatic sources here said. "Holbrooke's visit to Ankara has been postponed indefinitely," one source told AFP. "The political uncertainty and recent tension in the Aegean region have caused this decision." Following last week's crisis between Turkey and Greece over a disputed Aegean islet, Mr. Holbrooke announced Jan. 31 a plan to visit the capitals of the two NATO-members to urge their leaders to reduce tensions. However, Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis said Monday that Mr. Holbrooke would not visit Athens early next week as planned. Earlier Monday, Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel said Mr. Holbrooke was expected to arrive in Ankara Saturday. Turkish officials were not available to comment on Mr. Holbrooke's decision to call off the Turkey visit

# King: Jordan-Israel peace heralds better future for Mideast and end to suffering

## *Changes designed to bring out young talents*

AMMAN (J.T.) — Peace between Jordan and Israel is real peace between peoples that would ensure a better future for the Middle East which has suffered a lot because of wars and conflicts, His Majesty King Hussein said Monday.

King Hussein was addressing the president and members of the sixth international congress of representatives of the Jewish mass media in the world in the presence of Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, Their Royal Highnesses Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, the King's military secretary and Princess Ghida Talal and Information Minister Marwan Muasher.

Following is the text of the King's address at the meeting as broadcast by Jordan Television:

His Majesty King Hussein on Monday addresses a delegation representing the Jewish media in the world (Petra photo)

"My friends, I would like to thank you most sincerely for the kind words of introduction to our friends and for me to have the opportunity to speak to you today. I would hope that this meeting of yours has been a success and I really hope that in the future we will have the opportunities to welcome you again in Jordan whenever you are in our region. I hope that you will always feel amongst friends when you come to see us, that you will enjoy visiting with us, that you will see with each succeeding visit more of the change in the direction of greater harmony and cooperation between our peoples, the children of Abraham and their descendants.

"We have peace and we are building on it now. We have the sense of urgency to do whatever we can to make up for all the times that were lost, to give our people the opportunities to come together to apply themselves towards building and creating in this region the better future that is worthy of them. It is indeed at times difficult to go back in time for a short period and to see what have been achieved and what has been done. But it is, on the other hand, natural and normal that it is the case when peoples feel that the worthiest of objectives must be peace, cooperation, harmony between them and to build together the better future that is their right.

"We are very happy indeed that we have completely concluded our discussions of all matters regarding all fields of cooperation between our two countries and we have reached agreements and we intend to see them implemented in all these fields and areas. So we are now in a very exciting moment in time, it is just, hopefully, the beginning, the real beginning beyond agreements, to real cooperation between our peoples in all fields of life and all walks of life.

"We hope that what has been achieved will be an example to others and an inspiration to others. We hope that we can see a comprehensive peace in this region and we are confident that, with the determination that is there, with the will that is there, that this will be the case — (this) sounds some time soon — and this whole region will enjoy what it has not enjoyed in the past.

"Things are moving in the right direction. People are meeting all the time. People

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His Highness Prince Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the former prime minister, and His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, the military secretary of His Majesty the King, call on Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Monday (Petra photo)

# Premier tells ministers to work together to serve national goals

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti chaired the first meeting of his Cabinet Monday and pledged to carry out His Majesty King Hussein's directives in a "democratic manner to serve the country and safeguard the nation and public interests."

"The government will be guided by King Hussein's letter of appointment and will execute its contents in the letter and the spirit," Mr. Kabariti said, calling on the ministers to maintain contacts with the public and perform their taks as best as they could.

"The government's performance will hinge on the work of each and every

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## Good external ties are top priority – Muasher

AMMAN (Petra) — The main objective of the new government's foreign policy is to bolster Jordan's ties with other Arab countries and friendly nations and to build strong relations with Israel, Minister of Information Marwan Muasher said Monday.

Speaking in interviews with the BBC and Radio Israel, the minister said the new government will exert all efforts to implement and give momentum to the Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

"It is because Jordan is going through a process of political openness that the government has been formed mostly of Parliament members reflecting the various political trends in the Jordanian arena which agree on the broadlines of Jordan's internal and external policies" and led by Abdul Karim Al Kabariti, himself a young veteran parliamentarian," Dr. Muasher said.

"The new government is determined to carry out His Majesty King Hussein's directives contained in the letter of appointment, manifesting a qualitative improvement in government

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## Christopher and Peres *say talks with Syria* go ahead despite polls

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Shimon Peres and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher pledged Monday to press on with peace negotiations with Syria even if Israel becomes embroiled in early elections this spring.

"No matter what will happen in the country, we feel obliged to continue the negotiations without interruption," Mr. Peres said after meeting Mr. Christopher at the start of a new Israel-Syria peace shuttle by the U.S. diplomat.

"There is no danger that the negotiations will be harmed by elections. I have no intention of linking the two," Mr. Peres said at a joint press conference.

Mr. Christopher, who travels on to Damascus Tuesday for talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, also stressed that the expected early polls in Israel would not derail the struggling peace process.

"I believe we can continue the negotiations under any scenario here," he said.

"I have seen tremendous steps forward in the context of peace," he said, referring to three rounds of Israel-Syrian talks held since December at the Wye Plantation outside Washington.

He said the negotiations had "made remarkable progress" with both parties "discussing all issues openly."

"Israel and Syria are laying the foundations for a peace treaty," he said.

"Our role is to facilitate the negotiations ... after ending my trip Wednesday, we'll know better about how to proceed with the negotiations," he added.

Mr. Peres said Mr. Christopher's current tour, his third to the region since December, "is going to prepare the field for continuing the negotiations, whether it will be in Wye Plantation or elsewhere."

Senior Israeli officials say Mr. Peres will announce next Thursday that he is moving the general elections up to late May or early June and campaigning by Israeli politicians has already been in full swing for a week.

Several ministers said that talks with Syria bogged down over the thorny issues related to an eventual Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, no progress can be expected while the political establishment is embroiled in electioneering.

Barring an unexpected announcement from Mr. Assad, they said, Mr. Christopher's task will simply be to ensure that some level of talks between the two sides continues during the Israeli election campaign.

"There is room for working groups to start more extensive talks on all issues on

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# Cabinet is 'committed to uphold public rights and clean democracy'

By Sa'eda Kilani
*Special to the Jordan Times*

AMMAN — The broad coalition of left-of-centre and centrist ministers in the Cabinet of Abdul Karim Al Kabariti ensures not only a parliamentary vote of confidence for the government but also "clean" democracy in the country, a high-ranking official said Monday.

At the same time, the new Cabinet is not expected to last for more than one year, the official told the Jordan Times, noting that since many of the ministers who are also deputies are likely to run in the 1997 parliamentary elections, their stay in office for more than one year would be a conflict of interests.

Another reason for a reshuffle in one year from now could be the need to reduce the number of parliamentarians in the Cabinet. The presence of 22 deputies now in the new government may not be "excess baggage" but it could become so in the future, the official implied.

The inclusion of a high number of deputies in this Cabinet, he explained, was based on the experiences of the governments of Taher Masri and Abdul Salam Majali. Mr. Masri's Cabinet had a narrow parliamentary representation, limited to deputies from the Democratic Parliamentary Coalition bloc. This was detrimental to the Cabinet, which was forced to resign in six months.

Dr. Majali's Cabinet excluded parliamentarians totally and suffered a high degree of hostility from the Lower House of Parliament.

According to the official, the make-up of the Kabariti Cabinet also "preempts any need for Palace intervention to secure a parliamentary vote of confidence for the government."

A third reason for a possible limited life-span for the government could be the expected participation of the Islamists in another Cabinet also headed by Mr. Kabariti.

In a meeting with Mr. Kabariti on Saturday, Islamist leaders expressed their willingness to participate in a future government with him if "conditions" allowed it.

Observers believe that the Islamists need to evaluate the performance of the new Cabinet and the administration of Mr. Kabariti himself before they take part in a government that "is forced" to follow the policies of normalisation of relations with Israel.

According to the senior official, the Cabinet is keen on not only Islamist participation in government but also in preserving good relations with what he described as the moderate Islamic movement — the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party — that has set an example for Islamic political movements anywhere.

The official said he saw any undue pressure on a moderate group like the IAF, the largest Islamic grouping in the Kingdom, as leading to the collapse of its leadership and disintegration of its popular base. Such a situation might bring to the surface extremist movements and, consequently, instability to the country, said the official.

Therefore, one of the main tasks of the government, as promised by Mr. Kabariti himself is safeguarding public freedoms and enhancing real and true democracy, the official said.

The election law will be one of the new government's priorities. The 1997 parliamentary elections will be fair and free, the senior official promised. A draft election law prepared by the former government, which has been a target of criticism by writers and columnists, will

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# Reform – Kabariti's mandate

By Rana Sabbagh
*Reuter*

AMMAN — King Hussein has told his new Cabinet to modernise the government and fight bureaucracy and corruption so the Kingdom can compete in the world, politicians said on Monday.

When the King appointed Abdul Karim Al Kabariti, 46, prime minister on Sunday, he ordered him to lead a "pure white revolution" in seeking comprehensive change.

The 60-year-old King gained broad international backing after making peace with Israel in 1994 and now wants internal change to guarantee his Hashemite dynasty rules long after he is gone, politicians said.

They said he is betting on a new generation of politicians and technocrats led by Mr. Kabariti to modernise the Kingdom as it moves to the 21st century.

The King retired veterans, such as the influential Royal Court chief and the head of intelligence. Officials predict a coming shakeup in top ministry ranks, the army and police.

But there are many obstacles to quick reform.

Influential tribes and conservative politicians are likely to resist. The bloated public sector employs a quarter of the 90,000-strong workforce, which will be hard to slash in a time of rising unemployment and a widening gap between rich and poor.

In addition, many politicians say most members of the new government — which retains many conservatives and includes 22 members of Parliament including Mr. Kabariti himself — are not up to the task of radical change.

"We hear this talk about reforms every time there is a new government, the people's expectations are raised, but in the end nothing gets done," said economist Fahed Al Fanek. "I see no reasons why this government should be any different."

Politicians say Jordan risks marginalisation in the world if it does not improve the way its institutions run and does not increase political freedoms.

"You can only have a strong country if your internal house is in order and your economy is strong and boosted by investments," said one official. "Otherwise, the threat of collapse is there."

Jordan hopes to join the World Trade Organisation and reach free trade accords with Arab states and the European Union by 2010.

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# PLO executives start talks on charter

AL ARISH (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) Executive Committee met here on Monday to discuss Israeli demands for changes to its national covenant to remove calls for the elimination of the Jewish state.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat arrived in the north Sinai coastal town of Al Arish under a heavy bodyguard riding in land-rovers after death threats against him on Sunday by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group.

A quorum of 11 of the committee's 18 members entered the session after members opposed to the peace accords with Israel announced their boycott of the talks.

Nabil Abu Rudeina, Mr. Arafat's spokesman, said the meeting would end Tuesday morning.

The Al Arish meeting is expected to set a date for a meeting is expected to set a date for a meeting of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), the PLO's parliament-in-exile, which alone can change the charter.

Mr. Arafat has committed to removing clauses in the charter calling for Israel's elimination.

Mr. Abu Rudeina said committee member Elias Khoury was to attend the talks but cancelled at the last minute "due to sickness."

The head of the PLO's political department, Farouk Kaddoumi, decided not to attend the session "due to other engagements," Zohdi Al Kodra, the Palestinian ambassador to Egypt, said earlier.

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) has also announced it will not be there and DFLP officials said the meeting would be boycotted by the other main left-wing opposition movement, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Committee members Suleiman Najjab, Yasser Amr, Ali Ishak, Mohammad Zohdi Nashashibi, Abdullah Hurani, Yasser Abed Rabbo, Jamal Al Surani, Samir Ghosheh, Mahmoud Abbas and Jawad Al Ghosein all attended the session with Mr. Arafat.

The executive committee has 18 members but two independents, Mahmoud Darwish and Shariq Al Hut, have resigned.

Mr. Arafat meanwhile ordered a committee of officials and legal experts to draw up a basic law for the self-rule areas paving the way for a constitution.

Palestinian National Authority Justice Ministry Under-Secretary Ibrahim Daghme, who is on the committee, said Monday that the aim was to complete the basic law "within three months."

"Our purpose is to prepare a draft of a basic law or you can call it a constitution for the Palestinian territories," Mr. Daghme said.

"Every state must have a constitution and what we are making is like a constitution for this interim period."

The committee is expected to draw on a drafting effort that began in 1993, when the PNC appointed Anis Qassem, a Palestinian legal expert who lives in England, to work on a basic law for the self-rule areas.

Mr. Qassem has been appointed by Mr. Arafat to the new committee, which includes former PNA ministers Nabil Shaath and Freih Abu Middein as well as Camille Mansour, a professor at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank.

The basic law will cover separation of powers and the

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Royal Jordanian *The Wings Of Change*

# Iraq-U.N. talks face snags over oil export route

DUBAI (R) — Iraq's insistence on exporting oil from its Gulf ports could be a stumbling block in its talks with the United Nations on an oil-for-food plan, Gulf oil industry sources said on Monday.

Iraqi and U.N. technical experts begin talks on Tuesday in New York in search of a deal that could allow Iraq to export oil worth $2 billion. It would be the first Iraqi oil to reach world markets since Baghdad's forces invaded Kuwait in 1990.

But differences over which routes Iraq will be allowed to use to export its oil, together will Baghdad's reservations on U.N. food distribution in Kurdish areas, provide complicated operational problems.

"The possibility of agreement is strong but there's so many problems with how the deal will work in practice," a trader with a Western oil firm based in the United Arab Emirates said.

The crux of the export problem lies in how much of its oil Iraq can export from its own ports in the northern Gulf and how much by a pipeline that runs through Turkey.

Under U.N. Resolution 986 Iraq is obliged to export the "larger share" of any oil exported under U.N. supervision through a twin 1,049-kilometre pipeline that links Iraq's northern fields to Turkey's Mediterranean coast.

Baghdad has insisted that it export at least part of the 700,000 barrels per day (b/d) envisaged in Resolution 986 by tankers from its Gulf prots at Mina Al Bakr and Khor Al Amaya.

Its refusal to rely on the Turkish route is based on security worries since parts of the pipeline run through Kurdish-controlled areas of northern Iraq, traders say.

"For security reasons alone the pipeline option is far from attractive for (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein," a trader with a Japanese oil firm based in the Gulf said.

Turkish operators of the pipeline can also charge a transit fee for usage, a hard-currency cost that Baghdad avoids by using its own restored Gulf ports.

Iraqi officials say Mina Al Bakr and Khor Al Amaya can handle up to one million barrels per day (b/d) of Iraq oil exports, and they have said that the facilities are ready to receive supertankers.

Exporting from the Gulf ports would allow Baghdad to show its Gulf neighbours that it is again an oil force in the region and also open lucrative Asian markets, traders say.

Higher return markets such as Japan and South Korea would be rendered uneconomic if Iraqi oil was for sale only in the Mediterranean through the trans-Turkey pipeline.

Crude sold through the pipeline was almost exclusively bought by European and U.S. firms. France, Italy and Spain were major importers although the United States was Iraq's largest single oil buyer from 1988.

Baghdad was exporting 257,000 b/d to Japan on the eve of its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait — making it the country's fourth largest supplier. But it has seen its market-share disappear and taken by its regional and OPEC competitors Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Iran because of U.N. sanctions.

Losing its port export facilities on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast, which before the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis was Iraq's main outlet to Japan and other booming Asian energy markets, has also reinforced Iraq's need to redevelop a Gulf export potential.

Baghdad exported 900,000 b/d to world markets through Saudi Arabia before U.N. sanctions, 200,000 b/d of which went to nine Japanese firms under term supply contracts.

The pipelines that ran from Iraq across Saudi Arabia to the Red Sea port of Al Muajjiz were shut by the Saudi government immediately after Iraqi troops marched into Kuwait.

Analysts say Riyadh is highly unlikely to reopen them for a limited sale of Iraqi oil.

# Massoud prepares for new war with Taliban

JABEL SARAJ, Afghanistan (AFP) — A new battle for control of Kabul will erupt soon, according to commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, right-hand man of the government under siege in the Afghan capital.

"The students are preparing a new offensive against Kabul," Mr. Massoud said, referring to the Taliban militia at the gates of the capital.

Fighting could start in the next few days or just after the Holy Month of Ramadan in the second half of February, he said.

Mr. Massoud, a 42-year-old father of five, was also following Ramadan's strict guidelines as he gave an interview to AFP at his headquarters at Jabal Saraj, at the foot of the Hindu Kush hills, north of the capital.

No cigarettes and no tea during the day, and he and his fighters can only pray.

But commenting on the renewed conflict in his long-suffering country, Mr. Massoud said the government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani was breaking out of its isolation that hostile factions had attempted to impose.

"In the past we have been in conflict on four fronts," said Mr. Massoud, dressed in khaki green shirt and trousers and the traditional pakol hat.

"Now we are only faced with the Taliban, the Islamic students, who are dug in south of Kabul." The other factions have fallen by the wayside, he said.

# Abul Abbas wants to return to self-rule areas

AMMAN (AP) — Mahmoud Abbas (Abul Abbas), alleged mastermind of the 1985 Achille Lauro cruise liner hijacking, wants to return to the Palestinian self-rule areas to attend a crucial Palestinian National Council (PNC) meeting, an aide said Monday.

That body, the Palestinians' parliament-in-exile, is expected to be convened in Gaza in the spring to vote on deleting clauses in the Palestinian National Charter that implies a call for the elimination of Israel.

Israel has warned it will freeze the peace negotiations unless the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) retracts those clauses.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat needs a two-thirds majority in the PNC, which has a membership of between 450 and 650, to revoke those clauses.

Bilal Qassem, head of the Palestine Liberation Front's (PLF) political department, told the Associated Press that Abul Abbas "is a member of the PNC and, therefore, he has the right to attend the meeting like other exiled Palestinian leaders."

He said Abul Abbas has sent a letter to Mr. Arafat informing him of his decision, although it was not clear whether he will support Mr. Arafat or opponents of amending the charter.

Israel has agreed to allow all PNC members to return to the Palestinian autonomous areas to attend the meeting. The leaders of several PLO factions opposed to the peace process, including men still on Israel's wanted list, have already said they will do so.

Abul Abbas heads the pro-Iraqi wing of the Baghdad-based PLF and is currently believed to be in Iraq.

A statement issued by Abul Abbas, handed out by Mr. Qassem, said the PLF leader's decision stemmed from his desire "to safeguard Palestinian unity, despite the diverse political positions.

"We have stood, as we firmly do now, with the national goal of our people to establish its independent state with Jerusalem as its capital," Abul Abbas said in the statement.

His guerrillas carried out the Achille Lauro hijacking in the Mediterranean, during which they killed an American and threw his body overboard.

An Italian court found Abul Abbas guilty of the hijack. Some of the hijackers were sentenced to long prison terms. But Abul Abbas, then a member of the PLO's ruling Executive Committee, escaped arrest.

The PLF was also responsible for an abortive attack on a Tel Aviv beach in May 1990. Mr. Arafat's refusal to denounce that operation led to the United States suspending an 18-month-old dialogue with the PLO.

# Syria seeks Arab backing in water feud with Turkey

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria is seeking Arab backing for its dispute with Turkey, which it accuses of choking off waters from the lifeblood River Euphrates by building a series of dams, officials said on Monday.

Damascus has formally asked the Arab League to discuss the dispute and it will also hold talks with Iraqi officials to plan a coordinated stand on the issue.

The Syrian government has already sent a memorandum to the league asking for the dispute over the sharing of the waters of the River Euphrates — which flows to Syria and Iraq from Turkey — to be discussed at its ministerial council due to meet in Cairo on March 13, they said.

Senior officials from Syria and Iraq will meet in Damascus next Saturday. Diplomats said the meeting between the long-time Arab foes, who severed diplomatic ties in 1980, constituted a sign of improvement in relations.

Syria backed Iran in its eight-year war with Iraq which ended in 1988 and joined a U.S.-led multinational force which drove Iraqi invasion forces from Kuwait in 1991.

Officials said the Syrian memorandum charged that dams Turkey was building on the Euphrates had polluted and reduced the water flowing downstream to Syria and Iraq.

"Measures taken by the Turkish government on the Euphrates including the building of dams on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers and the dumping of polluted waters into the rivers were dangerous moves," one official said.

"According to international law Turkey should consult with countries who share the river waters before it starts building these dams," he said.

Syria said Turkey's multi-billion-dollar plan for the construction of several dams on the Euphrates had led to a sharp decline in the flow of waters to Syria which uses it for drinking and irrigation.

The Syrian protests have grown since November when Ankara announced a finance agreement for a fourth dam on the Euphrates, designed to produce power and irrigation water for southeastern Turkey.

German, Belgian, French and Austrian firms are part of an international consortium financing the new Birecik dam and power plant costing $1.62 billion.

Syria calls for the signing of a permanent water-sharing agreement with Turkey to replace a provisional accord requiring Turkey to allow the flow of 500 cubic metres of water to Syria per second.

But Turkey, which accuses Syria of backing the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), fighting for a Kurdish homeland in southeast Turkey, has been cool about the Syrian demand.

Foreign ministers of Egypt and six Gulf Arab states had criticised Turkey for building the dams without consulting Syria and Iraq.

The criticism by the so-called Damascus Delcaration states — Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates — came at the alliance's meeting in Damascus in late December.

# 3 newspaper editors face trial in Egypt

CAIRO (Agencies) — Three opposition journalists will go on trial for publishing articles accusing a former minister of cheating during parliamentary elections last year, Egyptian newspapers reported Monday.

The trial of Magdy Ahmad Hussein, Mustafa Bakry, and Mahmoud Bakry, all editors of Islamic-oriented newspapers, will be the latest against journalists under a controversial press law that increases punishments for publishing false information or inflammatory stories against state officials and institutions.

Journalists' unions and human rights groups have criticised the press law as an attempt to muzzle the press, and have demanded that it be repealed.

The three journalists had written articles accusing Mohammad Ali Maghoub, the former minister of religious affairs, of hiring thugs to intimidate voters and of using his influence to secure votes to the parliamentary elections last November.

Mr. Mahgoub was running against Mr. Bakry in a southern Cairo suburb. Both Mr. Mahgoub and Mr. Bakry lost.

Mr. Mahgoub denied the charges, but he lost his ministerial post in a cabinet reshuffle following the elections.

The journalists could not immediately be reached for comment.

Last Wednesday, Mr. Hussein was sentenced to one year in prison and fined 15,000 Egyptian pounds ($4,500) for publishing an article claiming that the son of the interior minister ran out on a hotel bill.

### Councils suspended

The government has suspended the activities of all local councils because of a ruling that the voting system used in council elections in 1993 was unconstitutional, official sources said.

The Supreme Constitutional Court ruled on Saturday against the voting system, which gave all the seats on a council to the party list which won the most votes.

Government newspapers quoted Local Government Minister Mahmoud Sherif as saying that the government would finish drafting a new law on council elections within days and the voting system would probably treat candidates as individuals.

They quoted an official source as saying that decisions taken by the local councils over the past two years remained valid, despite the court's ruling.

The ruling National Democratic Party won all but about 90 of the 2,779 local council seats in the elections. The second largest group was Muslim fundamentalists with 56 seats.

The councils cover a range of levels of local government, from village or city quarter up to provinces.

# Syria-Israel peace negotiation -- new American political gamble

By David Makovsky
*The Jerusalem Post*

SECRETARY OF State Warren Christopher now seems to be betting that early elections will not mean that after 17 trips to the Middle East, he is left holding the bag on peace talks with Syria.

It is now expected the Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who holds a 16 point lead over Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu, will emerge strengthened from the elections and still have time to clinch a deal with Syria before the U.S. elections in November.

But even Minister Yossi Beilin is not sure that Israel can meet that timetable — assuming Peres wins the election.

Beilin, who opposes early elections because of the deterious effect they could have on the negotiations, has said that if early elections are held, it could take a year from the time talks are resumed to arrive at a deal.

This could too late for Christopher, who have let it be known that he will retire regardless of whether President Bill Clinton is victorious.

However, disappointed Chistopher may be, there is no indication that he pressed Peres hard to change his mind, perhaps by reminding him of the his oft-quoted remark that it is "more important to win the peace than to win elections."

Israeli leaders are now telling Christopher the opposite. Without an early election win, peace and Peres's political future would be at risk. Brokering a Golan deal could at best be marginally helpful to Clinton in November, but with terms of a deal uncertain. Peres seems to believe that such an accord could be deadly to his own political prospects.

Peres is seeking to defuse this line of Likud attack by declaring he will hold a referendum on a Golan withdrawal even after the elections.

It seems that Israel sold the early elections idea to the U.S. as a low-risk proposition. After all, Peres is ahead in the polls; Hamas has not blown up buses recently; and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has committed himself to amending the Palestinian Covenant before the date talked about for the elections.

Yet in politics, anything can happen. Peres has ran four times before, and despite having leads in the past, never turned them into an unambiguous victory. The Likud has said that, if elected, it will not withdraw from the Golan. So one cannot preclude the possibility that the peace talks will not return to where they are today.

Ambassador to the U.S. Itamar Rabinovich once wrote about missed opportunities with Damascus soon after the establishment of Israel. The U.S. seems to be betting that Peres will win in May, and the current talks will yield more than a sequel with the same name.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Strong quake rocks northeast Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — An earthquake measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale hit areas of northeastern Iran on Monday, the official IRNA news agency reported. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage from the temblor which struck the cities of Neishabur and Kashmar in Khorasan province at 11:31 a.m. (0801 GMT). The epicentre was 130 kilometres southwest of the holy city of Mashhad in the same province. Several earthquakes of various magnitudes have struck regions in southern and northern Iran in the past several days.

## Women held for attack on Cairo church

CAIRO (AFP) — The wife of a leading figure in the armed Muslim fundamentalist Gamaa Al Islamiyah has been arrested for attacking a church in the Egyptian capital, police said Sunday. They said Najla Mohammad Hussein, 22, threw a petrol bomb at a church in the northeastern suburb of 'Ain Shams on Saturday night. But the bottle failed to explode and landed intact on a police guard post, and the woman was arrested immediately. Ms. Hussein is reported to have told police that she wanted to set fire to the church library and destroy its Christian books. She also faces charges of trying to kill the three policemen at their post. Her husband, Hossam Nuweir, has been in prison since May 1995.

## Yemen sacks officials for negligence

SANAA (AFP) — Hundreds of government officials in Yemen have been sacked for alleged corruption and negligence, following an unannounced inspection by President Ali Abdullah Saleh at 10 ministries, Yemeni television reported. "The president ordered the dismissal of a certain number of senior officials in the ministries and administrations, because they had shown themselves to be negligent," the television said. Mr. Saleh also told the defence and interior ministries to "demote, sack or hand over to justice" any officers found to have "failed in their duty," the television said. A source close to the president told AFP that hundreds of officials were affected by the measure at 10 out of the country's 24 ministries. During his round of inspection, Mr. Saleh stressed "the need to complete the programme of administrative and financial reforms" begun last year at the instigation of the International Monetary Fund, according to the television. Yemen promised donor countries in January to retire 25,000 officials in coming months. Government services in Yemen employ officially 700,000 people, at least half of whom are "ghost officials" receiving wages but occupying no post, according to diplomats.

## 10 hurt in blast at Israeli bromine plant

BEERSHEBA (AFP) — Ten people were hurt in an explosion of at a bromine plant on the outskirts of the southern town of Beersheba on Monday, Israeli Radio said. The environment ministry said steps were being taken to disperse the toxic cloud released by the explosion and to isolate the plant. The casualties, who were not in serious condition, were taken to hospital.

## Avalanche kills 4 in southeast Turkey

SEMDINLI (AP) — An avalanche killed four people, two of them students, in this mountainous southeastern town, the Anatolia news agency said Monday. The avalanche struck near the village of Kayalar in the Hakkari province Sunday night, about 1,400 kilometres southeast of Ankara. Avalanche have claimed some 300 victims, mostly in the eastern part of the country, over the past three years.

## Australia sends back envoy to Lebanon

SYDNEY (AFP) — An Australian ambassador will take up residence in Lebanon later this week for the first time in 12 years. Australia withdrew its previous ambassador from Beirut in 1984 because of civil war. It decided to reopen its mission there under new Ambassador Ian Parmeter now that peace has been restored. Mr. Parmeter, 48, has had previous diplomatic postings in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

## Egypt's biggest taxpayer is a bellydancer

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's most celebrated bellydancer, Fifi Abdu, is also the country's highest paying taxpayer, but has been a victim of tax officials who stole part of her returns this year, a newspaper reported on Monday. An administrative director and two employees in the tax office stole 30,000 Egyptian pounds ($9,000) in fines Fifi paid for late returns, the government daily Al Jumhouriya said. The three marked in the books that the dancer had only paid about $1.5 and made off with the rest, the paper said. Attiyat Abdul Fattah Ibrahim, better known by her stage name Fifi Abdu, is Egypt's highest paying taxpayer, according to the paper. The Egyptian press relishes Fifi's annual battles with the treasury over her tax returns, which care worth several million pounds. The same three bureaucrats, who have been arrested, also stole 250,000 pounds ($73,500) from the returns of a singer, Mona Abdul Ghani, Al Jumhouriya said.

## Lebanon shelling kills civilian, wounds 2

TYRE (R) — A Lebanese civilian was killed and two were wounded on Monday in an exchange of fire between Israeli forces and guerrillas in South Lebanon. Lebanese security sources said Israeli forces shelled the village of Mansoureh near the port city of Tyre, killing a 33-year-old woman and wounding another woman. Pro-Israeli security sources said a man was wounded when guerrillas shelled Bayadeh village inside the Israeli-occupied zone. In Beirut, Hizbollah claimed responsibility for shelling the zone.

# JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### JORDAN TELEVISION
*Tel: 773111-19*

PROGRAMME TWO
14:00 ..... Captain Planet
14:30 ..... Jonny Quest
14:50 ..... Spirit of Adventure
15:40 ..... Scientific Eye
16:30 ..... Voyagers
17:00 ..... Doc. — Montagne
17:15 Children Programme — Cupido
17:30 Serie — Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
18:00 Medical Magazine — Savoir Plus Sante
19:00 ..... Le Journal
19:15 ..... Magazine — Ushuaia
19:30 ..... News Headlines
19:35 ..... You Bet Your Life
20:00 ..... Doc. — Oriental Rugs
20:25 ..... Hawai Five-0
21:10 ..... Harry
22:00 ..... News In English
22:25 Three Sovereigns from Sarah
23:15 ..... Feature Film: "Psycho"

### PRAYER TIMES

05:03 ..... Fajr
06:22 ..... *(Sunrise) Duha*
11:50 ..... Dhuhr
14:50 ..... 'Asr
17:17 ..... Maghreb
18:36 ..... 'Isha

### CHURCHES

**St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh,** Tel. 810740
**Assemblies of God Church,** Tel. 632785.
**St. Joseph Church** Tel. 624590.
**Church of the Annunciation** Tel. 637440.
**De la Salle Church** Tel. 661757
**Terrasancta Church** Tel: 622366
**Church of the Annunciation** Tel. 623541.
**Anglican Church** Tel. 652826.
**Armenian Catholic Church** Tel. 771331.
**Armenian Orthodox Church** Tel. 775261.
**St. Ephraim Church** Tel. 771751.
**Amman International Church** Tel. 652526.
**Evangelical Lutheran Church** Tel: 824328.
**German-speaking Evangelical Congregation** Tel. 845457
**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints** Tel. 654932
**Church of Nazarene** Tel.675691.
**The Evangelical Local Church In Amman**
Tel. 811295.

### WEATHER

*Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.*

Temperatures are expected to rise significantly becoming 5 degrees centigrade above average with winds southwesterly moderate. In Aqaba winds will be westerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman ..... 3/18
Aqaba ..... 10/ 24
Deserts ..... 2/19
Jordan Valley ..... 8 / 23

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 13, Aqaba 21. Humidity readings: Amman 65 per cent, Aqaba 22 per cent.

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim ..... 649028
Dr. Khaldoun Kloub ..... 816715
Dr. Ahmad Manna' ..... 839756
Dr. Mohammad Hajjaj ..... 672817
Ferdows pharmacy ..... 778336
Al Asema pharmacy ..... 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy ..... 623672
Al Salam pharmacy ..... 636730
Yacoub pharmacy ..... 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy ..... 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy ..... 623672
Najib pharmacy ..... 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu ..... 281741
Alquds pharmacy ..... (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Yousef Abu Sa'd ..... 989000
Khalifeh pharmacy ..... 985417

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ..... 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue ..... 630341
Civil Defence Emergency ..... 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111. 637777
Fire Brigade ..... 617101
Blood Bank ..... 775121
Highway Police ..... 843402
Traffic Police ..... 896390
Public Security Department ..... 630321
Hotel Complaints ..... 605800
Price Complaints ..... 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints ..... 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints ..... 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) ..... 121
Overseas Calls ..... 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs ..... 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television ..... 773111
Radio Jordan ..... 774111
Water Authority ..... 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company ..... 636381
RJ Flight Information .... 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity .... 642362
Malhas, J. Amman ..... 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani ..... 607071
Shmeisani Hospital ..... 669131
University Hospital ..... 845845
Al-Mussher Hospital ..... 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali ..... 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali ..... 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen ... 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafich 775111/26
Army, Marka ..... 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital ..... 686100
Amal Hospital ..... 607155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery ..... 865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital ..... (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital ..... (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital ..... (02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital ..... (03)314111

### FOR THE TRAVELLER

### QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

**ARRIVALS**
**Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)**

04:05 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:30 ..... Damascus (RJ)
09:00 ..... Aqaba (RJ)
09:25 ..... Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 ..... Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 ..... Beirut (RJ)
10:15 ..... Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
11:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)
14:15 Kuala Lumpur, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:20 ..... Cairo (RJ)
17:15 ... Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:00 ..... London, Frankfurt (RJ)

**Other Flights (Terminal 2)**

11:15 ..... Aden, Hudaidah (DY)
13:10 ..... Frankfurt (YP)
14:20 ..... Rome (AZ)
14:55 ..... Munich, Aleppo (YP)
18:15 ..... Dubai (EK)
20:10 ..... Beirut (ME)
23:40 ..... Amsterdam (KL)
00:55 ..... Bucharest (RO)
01:10 ..... London (KJ)

**DEPARTURES**
**Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)**

06:00 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)
06:15 ..... Beirut (RJ)
06:30 ..... Aqaba (RJ)
08:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:05 ..... Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:10 ..... Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:45 ..... Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:00 ..... Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:05 ..... London (RJ)
12:15 ..... Cairo (RJ)
16:30 Abu Dhabi, Jakarta (add) (RJ)
20:30 .... Damascus, Larnaca (RJ)
20:35 ..... Jeddah (RJ)
21:10 ..... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
23:05 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

**Other Flights (Terminal 2)**

06:00 ..... Damascus, Paris (AF)
12:15 Hudaidah, Sanaa, Aden (DY)
14:10 ..... Frankfurt (YP)
15:20 ..... Damascus (AZ)
15:45 ..... Munich (YP)
19:15 ..... Dubai (EK)
00:40 ..... Amsterdam (KL)
01:55 ..... Bucharest (RO)

### HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

### MARKET PRICES

*Upper/lower price in fils per kg.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Apple | 700/ 500 |
| Banana | 620/620 |
| Banana (Mukammar) | 550/550 |
| Banana (imported) | 820/600 |
| Cabbage | 70 / 40 |
| Carrot | 180/100 |
| Cauliflower | 200/120 |
| Cucumbers (large) | 150/ 100 |
| Cucumbers (small) | 280 / 180 |
| Eggplant | 220/ 150 |
| Garlic | 1000/800 |
| Grape Fruit | 200/120 |
| Lemon | 400/250 |
| Marrow (large) | 120/ 80 |
| Marrow (small) | 240 / 170 |
| Onion (green) | 140/80 |
| Onion (dry) | 220/ 150 |
| Orange | 600/500 |
| Pepper (hot) | 550 / 400 |
| Pepper (sweet) | 550/400 |
| Potato | 230/150 |
| Radish | 180/100 |
| String Beans | 780 / 500 |
| Spanish | 160 / 100 |
| Tomato | 140/60 |

KING HOSTS IFTAR: His Majesty King Hussein on Monday hosts at Al Hussein Youth City an iftar banquet in honour of representatives of the Amman and Balqa governorates. The iftar was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, the King's cultural secretary His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, the King's military advisor, the King's advisor on tribal affairs and other members of the Royal family. The King and the guests performed Al Maghreb prayers together (Petra photo)

# General public expresses mixed views on Kabariti appointment

By Ghalia Alul
*Special to the Jordan Times*

AMMAN— The appointment of a new government headed by Abdul Karim Kabariti has drawn mixed views from the Jordanian public with some people describing the 46-year-old prime minister as "the right person for the task," and others saying he was too young or inexperienced to shoulder the responsibility.

Expressing confidence that Mr. Kabariti would succeed in doing his job, one Jordanian said that the prime minister would lead the country in the right direction

"Mr. Kabariti is the right person for the task as Jordan is moving towards securing ties with the neighbouring countries and the rest of the world," he said.

Bilal Hijawi, an operations director for the Financial Times Review, welcomed the inclusion of new blood in the government and suggested that the new prime minister focus on the business aspect since "the pace of economic change is slow in Jordan."

Describing him as a "doer," Mr. Hijawi added that Mr. Kabariti is a practical and liberal person whom Jordanians need at this stage.

Ra'ed Abu Hassan, a university student agreed that injecting a new breed into the government was essential. He added that Mr. Kabariti is a respected politician and a good spokesperson for the country.

It is important that he has succeeded in building good relations with neighbouring countries especially the Gulf, Mr. Abu Hassan said.

"It is about time that a change occurred in the country, especially to give the new generation of politicians the opportunity to introduce change in the government," added Mr. Abu Hassan.

Working woman, Suheir Kattan, said the prime minister was an experienced and an active man who had a good personality. He would benefit the country with his good qualifications, she added.

"As a young man, Mr. Kabariti is well aware of the contemporary developments in the country. Therefore he will be closer to our problems," said Ms. Kattan.

A 26-year-old housewife from Irbid said that although she had no experience in politics, she thought that as foreign minister, Mr. Kabariti was an active man and will continue in his mission efficiently.

Faisal Mahmoud, a Palestinian Liberation Army officer from Zarqa, said the prime minister is competent to do the job since he represents different trends and peoples. He could act as a linchpin between the country's internal and external policies, he added.

"Mr. Kabariti was appointed because he was a responsible person as foreign minister and will be capable of holding more responsibilities as prime minister," said Othman Faris, a businessman.

However, some Jordanians were sceptical that the new prime minister will be able to shoulder the responsibility when Jordan is undergoing economic and political changes.

Mr. Kabariti was also seen by some as too young, and having too limited economic and political experience for the job.

"I don't think that Mr. Kabariti is the right person for the job because of his policies towards Iraq," one businessman said.

As foreign minister, Mr. Kabariti worked hard to ensure reconciliation with the Gulf countries and improved Jordan's relations with the United States and consolidated the peace treaty with Israel. These moves, coupled with statements made by Mr. Kabariti about the situation in Iraq worked to distance Amman from the regime in Baghdad.

The businessman, who asked not to be identified, said Mr. Kabariti's policies towards the Iraqis might worsen the relations between Jordanian businessmen and manufacturers who directed their industries towards the Iraqi market, and Iraqi businessmen.

"The government might not feel this change, but industrial manufacturers will," he said.

Mr. Kabariti's appointment caught other Jordanians by surprise, as they felt he is not qualified enough to take over as prime minister.

"I was surprised that Mr. Kabariti was appointed as prime minister at this time. Jordan needs a stronger person to be able to carry out this difficult task, as the political and economic fields entered a new era," a civil engineer told the Jordan Times.

"There are many other politicians with political and economic experiences who are more capable to take over as prime ministers," he added.

According to Jamal Al Jadid 34, Mr. Kabariti had little experience and qualifications to take over the government.

"It is early to appoint Mr. Kabariti as prime minister as he does not have enough experience in the general service," he added.

Mr. Jadid said most of the figures in the prime minister's government who were drawn from the parliamentary bloc also had little experience.

Nevertheless, he added, one could not predict anything at this stage.

On the streets of Amman some people were indifferent to the new prime minister, some were not aware of the change in government saying they were not interested in politics, and others had nothing to say attributing their silence to their scepticism that any new government would introduce actual change.

"Whether we said anything or not, the government does what it desires," one woman said.

Another worker expressed his confidence in His Majesty King Hussein and said "whoever our King trusts, we as Jordanians should trust."

"We know the prime minister would fulfill the country's as well the people's needs," Ahmad Odwan, a taxi office operator said.

Many other Jordanians from Amman, Irbid and Zarqa had nothing to say about the new prime minister other than that they had no interest in politics.

"I have no idea about the prime minister as I do not follow the news," a 20-year-old Zarqa housewife said.

Another housewife declined to express her opinion saying she preferred not to "interfere" in politics.

Three former prime ministers, (from foreground to background) Ahmad Lawzi, Zeid Rifai and Mudar Badran, Monday congratulate newly appointed Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti upon his forming his Cabinet (Petra photo)

## King presents specially-fitted vehicles to 35 disabled citizens

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday presented as a gift 35 vehicles specially fitted for handicapped drivers to citizens suffering from various disabilities.

The presentation was made on the King's behalf by HRH Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid, president of the Jordanian Sports Federation for the Handicapped.

Conveying King Hussein's greetings and good wishes to the recipients, Prince Ra'ad said that the gift was a gesture of solidarity and support for the disabled, bearing humanitarian, religious and charitable meaning during the holy month of Ramadan.

There are 250 names of handicapped persons still on the waiting list for similar vehicles considered vital to improving their living conditions, Prince Raad said adding that every possible effort will be made to help them acquire such vehicles

Each of the vehicles is worth JD 4,500, said the Prince. He said spare parts are available in Jordan and there was a good possibility of exempting these parts from customs duty.

One of the recipients, Adnan Abu Salman of Irbid Governorate, said he has been suffering from a disability for seven years and was not able to earn a living for his family.

Turki Hassan a resident of Mafraq governorate said he suffered a disability in 1988 and was determined to use the car for earning a living, while Adel Ishaq who has been suffering from disability over the past 48 years said he was grateful to the King as he can now start working to sustain a five member family.

## Jordan promises continued cooperation with U.N. Habitat programme — housing official

NEW YORK (Petra) —Jordan will continue to cooperate with and support the efforts of the U.N. Centre for Human Settlement (Habitat) and looks forward to a greater role by the U.N. agency in ensuring sustainable development. Director General of the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) Yousef Hiyasat said here Monday.

Jordan considers Habitat's role as central and vital to helping the Kingdom and other developing nations in urban development and in helping create housing and in increasing public awareness towards developments that have direct impact on social, economic, political and environmental development, said Mr. Hiyasat in an address to a Habitat meeting which opened at the U.N.

The meeting is the third of its kind organised and sponsored by the U.N. to prepare the way for the world conference on habitat which is due to be held in Istanbul later this year.

For its part, Jordan is starting on measures to link up with the private sector to help it carry out its national role in implementing housing programmes in the Kingdom, said Mr. Hiyasat.

Next month, Amman will host a pan-Arab meeting of mayors from 40 Arab capitals and cities as well as investors and business people keen on investing in housing schemes, to discuss urban development in the Arab World, according to Mr. Hiyasat.

Mr. Hiyasat voiced Jordan's call on other nations to reduce spending on armaments, save funds for improving the environment and people's living conditions and finance urban development. He urged the media to intensify its campaigns at the local, regional and international levels aimed at spreading awareness about matters to improve habitats and the environment.

## Brothers shoot sister to death, says official

By Rana Husseini
*Special to the Jordan Times*

AMMAN — A 24-year-old woman from Hartha town in Irbid Sunday was shot and killed by her two brothers for what they described as "immoral behaviour" one day after she was released from prison, according to an official source.

Khawlah Nayef was shoot several times in the head and chest, the source said, by her brothers Baker, 29, and Anas 25. The brothers surrendered to police immediately after the murder, the source said.

Both confessed to committing the crime, said the source, speaking on condition of anonymity.

According to the source, Khawlah was shot in her family's home after being released from prison Saturday. She was serving a one-year prison term for "adulterous behaviours," the source said.

He said Khawlah's family planned to kill her upon her release and assigned the task to her brothers.

An Irbid police official contacted by the Jordan Times Monday confirmed that a woman was killed but declined to give any further details.

Meanwhile, in Amman police Monday continued their search for a pickup driver whose vehicle struck and killed a pedestrian in the north Marka area on Sunday, a Public Security Department (PSD) report said.

According to the report, the vehicle which struck and killed Mahmoud Ibrahim, 24, was identified as a Mazda pickup truck.

Police contacted by the Jordan Times Monday refused to release any information regarding the incident. As of Monday evening, authorities were still searching for the vehicle.

## Court sentences Abu Rishteh to 3 years

By Rana Husseini
*Special to the Jordan Times*

AMMAN — The State Security Court Monday sentenced Muslim activist Atta Abu Rishteh to three years in prison after he was found guilty of slandering His Majesty King Hussein in a newspaper interview last October.

Defence attorney Abdul Fattah Lafi, expressed disappointment with the court's decision and said he was appealing the verdict.

"I respect the court's decision but I think that the court showed no mercy by sentencing my client to the maximum penalty," Mr. Lafi told the Jordan Times following the announcement of the verdict.

Abu Rishteh, who pleaded not guilty in December, was detained on Oct. 15 by authorities in his office in Ruseifeh, nine days after he was interviewed by an Arabic weekly, Al Hiwar, in which he made several remarks slandering the King.

"The court did not take into consideration my client's social and political situation in this country," Mr. Lafi added.

Abu Rishteh, 53, spokesman for the illegal Hezb Al Tahrir (Liberation Party), was arrested several times over the past 10 years for militant activities and affiliation with Hezb Al Tahrir, a fundamentalist group that does not recognise any existing Arab or Muslim regime, and calls for establishing a caliphate style Islamic state.

During the past four months, Abu Rishteh's defence was trying to prove that their client's remarks quoted in the newspaper interview were not slanderous but were based on interpretations of the Islamic Sharia and that "Abu Rishteh was following his right to question officials as embedded in the Sharia."

Defence witnesses in the trial included Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Izzedin Al Khatib Al Tamimi and Sheikh Abdul Aziz Khayyat.

State Prosecutor Major Mahmoud Obeidat had demanded the maximum penalty.

In presenting its case, the prosecution produced a confession signed by Mr. Abu Rishteh, evidence (the newspaper interview) and one witness, editor of Al Hiwar Weekly Adullah Bani Issa

In another development in the case, Maj. Obeidat forwarded Abu Rishteh's file last week to the Zarqa prosecutor to question Abu Rishteh on charges of belonging to an outlawed organisation.

Maj. Obeidat had ruled that cases involving affiliation to an illegal organisation, of which Abu Rishteh is accused, were not within his jurisdiction.

According to Mr. Lafi, Abu Rishteh will be questioned by the Zarqa prosecutor while in prison.

The penalty for belonging to an illegal organisation could reach up to three years.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Jordanian food exports to U.S. require FDA approval

AMMAN (Petra)—The Amman Chamber of Industry said Monday that it has received a memorandum from the United States embassy in Amman notifying it that Jordanian-made food and medical supplies can be marketed in the U.S. if the exported products adhere to specifications set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

### Ministry to upgrade teachers' performance

AMMAN (Petra)—The Ministry of Education said Monday that it will embark on a programme aimed at upgrading the qualifications of men and women teachers employed at the country's elementary and secondary schools in Jordan starting Feb. 15. It said that the training of teachers aims at improving the educational system as well as the performance of teachers in implemenation of resolutions taken by the 1987 national educational conference.

### German charity donates computers to school

AMMAN (Petra)— A German charity organisation Monday donated sets of computers to the German- established Schnellar vocational school in Marka. The computers were handed over to Sami Habibi, director of the school, who said that the school will start training programmes on the computers as soon as the Ministry of Education prepares a syllabus. Mr. Habibi said the school will organise training courses on computers for east Amman residents.

### Ways to attract foreign investments discussed

AMMAN (Petra)— Director General of the Investment Promotion Corporation Taleb Rifai had a meeting Monday with a group of leading Jordanian businessmen to discuss coordination of efforts between the corporation and the business community on promoting investments. The two sides agreed to create a private sector committee which will explore ways for attracting foreign investments and removing obstacles impeding the flow of capital into the country.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

### JAZZ EVENING

* A "Jazz Evening" in celebration of Black History Month in the United States, at the American Center. Featuring jazz music, videos and a discussion about the history of jazz. At 8:00 p.m.

### PLAY/CONCERTS

* Musical performance by artist Maghnirah at the Phoenix Gallery, Gardens Street at 8:30 p.m.

* "Ramadan Supermarket" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. and a concert by Al Hannounah Band for Popular Art at 8:00 p.m.

### EXHIBITIONS

* Engravings by French artists at the French Cultural Centre (until Feb. 29).

* Printmaking and paintings by Jordanian artist Yasser Dweik at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Luweibdeh. Also displaying paintings and sculptures by contemporary artists (until Feb. 18).

* Plastic (abstract) art exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utheina (until Feb. 6).

# Yeltsin comes under mounting pressure to end Chechenya war

MOSCOW (AFP) — Faced by unrelenting guerrilla resistance, demonstrations, ridicule from political rivals and voter discontent, President Boris Yeltsin was under mounting pressure Monday to end the war in Chechenya.

In Grozny, the devastated Chechen capital, about 6,000 demonstrators gathered for a second day to demand the withdrawal of Russian troops who stormed the tiny Caucasus republic almost 15 months ago.

At the Kremlin, Mr. Yeltsin was to discuss "means of normalising the (Chechen) situation" with Oleg Lobov, his representative in Chechenya and secretary of the powerful Kremlin Security Council, the presidency said in a statement.

He also planned to meet with Ruslan Aushev, leader of the Russian Caucasus Republic of Ingushetia, which borders Chechenya and has close ethnic ties to the secessionist republic.

For Mr. Yeltsin, who is expected to run for re-election on June 16, either winning or ending the war is becoming an imperative, as the death toll continues to mount and military assaults still fail to crush the rebel movement.

His opponents, ranging from Communist Party chief Gennady Zyuganov to liberal Yabloko Party leader Grigory Yavlinsky, are wooing voters by calling for peace.

Retired General Alexander Lebed, a nationalist and also a presidential candidate, said Sunday that a political, not military decision was needed to end the war, which has cost an estimated 25,000 civilian lives and left much of Chechenya in ruins since Russian troops attacked in December 1994.

"You can stop the war in Chechenya now," he said on NTV independent television.

Since peace negotiations were abandoned in October, Mr. Yeltsin has repeatedly announced plans to smash the Chechen resistance with massive military force.

When Chechen guerrillas took about 150 people hostage last month in the neighbouring Russian Republic of Dagestan, Mr. Yeltsin ordered a raid to wipe out the hostage takers, despite the presence of the captives.

But Mr. Yeltsin's attempt to teach the Chechens a lesson and show himself in control of the situation backfired when the Chechens fought off Russian commandos and then managed to escape back into Chechenya with many of their prisoners.

In a further embarrassment for the Kremlin, the Chechens still hold 12 of the hostages taken in Dagestan plus another 29 Russians seized in Chechenya itself and negotiations have so far achieved no results.

Now, there are signs that Mr. Yeltsin will switch tactics in a bid to save his political skin.

On Saturday, the commander of Russian troops in Chechenya said there would be a complete change in Russian policy.

General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov said Russian policy would undergo "a 180 degree" turn, a statement interpreted by many as meaning a troop withdrawal.

Last week, the powerful governor of the Nizhny Novgorod region, Boris Nemtsov, said after a meeting with Mr. Yeltsin that the 65-year-old president would shortly issue a peace plan.

Mr. Yeltsin has been "thinking a lot about how to end this war," Mr. Nemtsov said.

Mr. Nemtsov presented a petition to end the war signed by one million Nizhny Novgorod residents, threatening to withdraw his long-time support for Mr. Yeltsin if the Kremlin continued the war.

A high-ranking member of the Russian-installed Chechen government in Grozny was quoted by Interfax News Agency as saying that consultations were being held Monday over a series of 16 agreements that would give Chechenya a special status within the Russian Federation.

But most analysts agree that Moscow will not be able to end the conflict without negotiating directly with the rebel government, including its leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev, who has rejected anything short of independence for chechenya.

Meanwhile thousands of supporters of Mr. Dudayev holding an anti-Russian protest meeting in the regional capital Grozny began to disperse peacefully Monday, Interfax News Agency said.

It quoted an Interior Ministry official in Chechenya as saying most of a crowd of 2,500-3,000 had dispersed by 4.30 p.m. (1330 GMT) and that no shots had been fired. ITAR-TASS news agency had earlier reported Russian armoured vehicles advancing on a crowd outside the Presidential Palace in Grozny at 3 p.m. (1200 GMT).

Mr. Dudayev's supporters were gathering in Grozny for the second successive day to demand the withdrawal of Russian troops from the mostly Muslim region and the resignation of Moscow-backed Chechen leader Doku Zavgayev.

TASS earlier quoted the adviser to the Security Council in the Moscow-backed local government Ruslan Tsakayev as saying he did not exclude the possibility of "armed provocations" against government buildings in Grozny.

In this case, "the republic's government may turn to the federal forces for help, for which a corresponding plan has been worked out," Mr. Tsakayev told TASS.

Pakistani protesters try to break through a barbed-wire barricade to reach the Indian High Commission (embassy) in Islamabad Monday. The government declared a public holiday to express solidarity with Kashmiris living under Indian rule (Reuter photo)

# Pakistanis burn effigy of Rao on 'day of solidarity' with Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (R) — Rallies were staged across Pakistan Monday, a government-declared public holiday proclaimed as a "day of solidarity" with Indian-ruled Kashmir.

Witnesses said businesses, schools and offices were shut throughout Pakistan after Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto ordered what has become an annual show of support for Kashmir.

In Islamabad about 400 demonstrators gathered outside parliament, carrying banners reading: "Kashmir will become Pakistan" and "Stop cruelties in Kashmir", witnesses said.

The crowd burnt effigies of Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and tried to break through a police barricade, but riot police prevented them from surging towards the Indian High Commission or embassy.

A small delegation led by Nawabzada Nasrullah, chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir, was allowed through to deliver a protest note to the Indian mission.

The demonstrators later went to Islamabad's sister city of Rawalpindi in trucks and buses for a rally.

Police said small groups of people burnt tyres on main roads in Lahore, the capital of Punjab province, where an alliance of religious parties mounted an anti-Indian procession.

Ms. Bhutto said Sunday that Pakistan was ready for talks with India to settle their long-standing dispute over Kashmir but declared it would not be intimidated by its old enemy.

In a televised speech, she accused India of sabre-rattling because of frustration at its failure to crush the revolt which Kashmiri separatist guerrillas launched in 1990.

"India knows Pakistan's strength. India knows that Pakistan is capable of matching India in every field if the situation so arises," she said.

"We in Pakistan are prepared to negotiate with India for a settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with international law," she added.

She rejected Indian plans to hold elections in Kashmir and said Kashmiris could only win self-determination through a U.N.-mandated plebiscite.

India and Pakistan, which have fought two wars over Kashmir since 1947, both deny possessing nuclear weapons but U.S. officials say they could quickly assemble them.

Hindu-dominated India, which rules two thirds of Kashmir, accuses Islamabad of training and arming the Muslim militants seeking independence or union with Islamic Pakistan.

Pakistan, which controls the remaining third of the Himalayan region, says its support for the revolt, in which more than 20,000 people are estimated to have been killed, is only moral and political.

## 4-year-old becomes burglars' little helper

COVENTRY, England (R) — A four-year-old British boy helped burglars steal his parent's hidden cash and valuables after finding what he thought were family friends in his home during the night. Russell Brown even held open the door for the thieves as they loaded the video recorder, hi-fi, camera and other items into their car, police said Monday. The little boy had woken in the night while his parents were sleeping when he found the men in the house in Coventry, central England. He chatted politely with them, showed them his mother's hidden purse and even took them to a garden shed where the burglars found his father's power drill. His father said Russell did not reveal his part in the burglary until the following day. "We can't tell him off because he's just a four-year-old and he thought he was doing the right thing," his father, also called Russell, told reporters.

## Cow gives birth to 2-headed calf

MOSCOW (AP) — A cow has given birth to a two-headed calf in the Russian city of Perm in the Ural Mountains, a popular Moscow daily reported Saturday. According to Moskovsky Komsomolets, the calf has two mouths and three eyes. The heads are joined at the top, with the third eye in the middle. Some workers at the city's race track, where the calf was born, blame pollution from an adjacent oil plant. "The two-headed calf is very lively and sucks milk from his mother by the two mouths simultaneously," the daily said. Local children love the calf and try to feed it candy and milk. Unfortunately, veterinarians predict the calf will not live long because it will be unable to chew and can only suck its mother's milk, the newspaper said.

## China closes 2 nightclubs for striptease shows

SHANGHAI (R) — Chinese police have sent two young striptease artists to labour re-education camps and briefly closed two nightclubs in southern Hainan province where they were performing, a newspaper said Monday. The police seized one 22-year-old woman on Jan. 18 and another, aged 19, the next day in the seaside resort of Sanya in China's southernmost province. Both were arrested in mid-performance, the Xinmin Evening News said. Police ordered both women to serve one year of the administrative punishment in labour camps. The police also fined each nightclub 5,000 yuan ($600) for allowing women to perform striptease acts and closed them for five days, it said.

## Indian zoo in trouble over sale of baby hippos

New Delhi (AFP) — Indian wildlife authorities plan criminal charges against the keepers of a state-own zoo for palming off two baby hippos to a circus, the Press Trust of India said Sunday. The Indian Zoo Authority has obtained court orders to prosecute officials of the zoo in the northern city of Lucknow for selling the two babies to perform at a private circus. The news agency did not specify the date of the transaction, but said the zookeepers would be prosecuted for violating the rights of the animals. India has enforced a series of tough measures to protect wildlife. It prohibits the sale of animals from zoos and national parks.

# Cambodian forces take strategic hills

ARANYAPRATHET, Thailand (AFP) — Two strategic hills leading to a Khmer Rouge stronghold in northwest Cambodia fell Monday to government forces, Cambodian army sources said.

Government forces captured Hill 25 and nearby Hill 36 from the rebels in a two-day operation but lost four tanks and suffered heavy casualties, a captain, who requested anonymity, told AFP.

Thirty soldiers were killed and another 20 injured, while two tanks were demolished, the Cambodian army sources said. On Sunday Cambodian forces lost two tanks and 12 men from an elite unit.

The captain, who is in charge of the tank unit engaged in the offensive, said the Khmer Rouge also suffered heavy losses as scores of dead rebels had been found strewn around the two hills.

Cambodian troops spearheaded by tanks and reinforcements from the 3rd and 12th divisions converged on Hill 25 and Hill 36 in a two-pronged assault on the Khmer Rouge. The firefight went on for two hours, the sources said.

The government troops split up to surround the Khmer Rouge but were lured into a minefield near Hill 36, where rebels attacked them with rocket-propelled grenades and anti-tank guns, they said.

Hill 25 lies south of the tip of Laem Nong Ian, where Thailand juts ten kilometres into cambodia, and guards approaches to the rebel forward base at Phum Klar Ngap and a major stronghold at Phnom Malai, to the west. Cambodian forces have been attacking the hill since early January.

Cambodian troops earlier shelled the Khmer Rouge base at Phum Klar Ngap, sparking an artillery duel that lasted throughout the day.

Reinforcements of 500 fresh Cambodian troops from the northern town of Siem Reap were expected to arrive at a position outside Poipet, on the Thai frontier by Feb. 15, he said.

# *Opposition sets plans to thwart Bangladesh elections*

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh's opposition parties Monday announced a series of strikes and other protest moves to resist the holding of general elections slated for Feb. 15.

Opposition parties held separate news conferences to announce the coordinated protest programme, which includes a nationwide 48-hour strike beginning on Feb. 14.

Other protest moves include a march towards Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's residence on Feb. 10 and a road and rail blockade across the country on Feb. 13.

All of the country's major opposition parties, including the Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina, the Jatiya Party of jailed ex-President Hossain Mohammad Ershad and the fundamentalist Jamaat-E-Islami, are boycotting the election.

Mrs. Khaleda's ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is the only major party, along with a host of little known groups, participating in the elections.

Bangladesh's Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque said the polls would go ahead despite the opposition programme.

"We will put in all our efforts to hold the election with minimal violence despite opposition movements to sabotage the polls," he told Reuters.

The opposition wants Mrs. Khaleda to resign and transfer power to a neutral caretaker administration before the polls. But Mrs. Khaleda, elected in 1991, has rejected the demand as unconstitutional.

The opposition raised the demand after accusing the government of widespread corruption and vote rigging in by-elections.

"We want to safeguard the voters' rights through holding the polls under a neutral authority. We can't allow the government to hold voterless farcical elections," said Mr. Hasina at a news conference.

# Japanese aid to Burma subject to democratisation, official says

BANGKOK (AFP) — Japan would weigh Bur-ma's progress toward de-mocracy when considering whether to grant aid to its military government, but could not control the actions of private citizens, a Japanese government representative said here Monday.

"So far as aid to Myanmar (Burma) is concerned, our policy is to decide case by case, in consideration of the current situation, its democratisation and protection of basic human rights," former Ambassador Atsuhiko Yatabe said.

The special assistant to Japan's foreign minister was responding to questions at a news conference as head of a high-level delegation discussing Japanese aid to Thailand.

Japan was listed by officials of the Burmese junta among those countries whose investments and growing engagement have made it unnecessary to enter talks with the democratic opposition, led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

But Mr. Yatabe said that while his government would carefully monitor political evolution in Burma, it was not within its power to stem the flow of investment.

"Japan is a market country. Even the powerful MITI (Ministry for International Trade and Industry) cannot control the activities of private investors," he said.

Burma released Aung San Suu Kyi from six years of house arrest last year, prompting Japan to announce that it would consider resuming aid to the country. A grant was subsequently authorised for the extension of an educational institute for nurses.

Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy swept national elections organised by the government in 1990 despite the detention of the charismatic leader, but the junta refused to recognise the results and hand over power.

# Colombian leader and drug dealer's wife were friends — aide

BOGOTA (R) — The murdered wife of a reputed drug trafficker was such good friends with Colombian President Ernesto Samper that she practically paid for a European trip after his election victory two years ago, said a former aide whose testimony was published Sunday.

In excerpts of his testimony to local prosecutors obtained by the newspaper El Tiempo, the treasurer of Mr. Samper's election campaign said Elizabeth Montoya De Sarria had also helped raise thousands of dollars for Mr. Samper's race both within and outside the country.

Mrs. Montoya, who was shot to death by unidentified gunmen in northern Bogota last Thursday, had been summoned by the prosecutor-general's office as a key witness in its investigation into charges that drug traffickers partly financed Mr. Samper's 1994 campaign. The investigation has sparked one of the worst political crises to beset Colombia, prompting calls for Mr. Samper's resignation.

Mrs. Montoya had gone into hiding and had not responded to the summons. The campaign's treasurer, Santiago Medina, said Mr. Samper had known Mrs. Montoya for years.

"I knew her during the campaign as a person who was a very good friend of Mr. Samper's," Mr. Medina was quoted as saying.

He said Mrs. Montoya gave Mr. Samper and his wife, Jacquin Strouss, $30,000 as a gift after winning the elections.

"They were given ... to Samper for his trip to Europe after he was elected president," he said.

But one of Mr. Samper's bodyguards denied the allegation in an interview with the newspaper.

Mr. Medina said Mr. Montoya worked closely with Mr. Samper throughout the campaign, raising thousands of dollars among local supporters and foreign business leaders.

Mr. Medina said she also flew Interior Minister Horacio Serpa in her private plane to a campaign rally on the Caribbean island of San Andres, where she put him up at her family's hotel.

Mr. Serpa later confirmed the trip to the newspaper but swore he did not know the owner of the plane or the hotel.

# N. Ireland leader attacks Irish minister

DUBLIN (R) — The deadlocked Northern Ireland peace process was snarled in fresh controversy Monday when Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring was accused of meddling in the province's internal affairs.

John Taylor, deputy leader of Northern Ireland's Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), a Protestant group which wants the province to stay British, said Mr. Spring had no role in the peace process.

"His involvement in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland is nil...We are in no mood to be pushed around by anybody like Dick Spring," Taylor said in remarks to the Irish Times.

Mr. Taylor labelled Spring, who is also deputy prime minister, "the most detested politician in Northern Ireland".

"It is time we put it bluntly to Mr. Spring we will not be talking to him at any stage about the internal affairs of Northern Ireland," he said.

Mr. Taylor's attack soured the atmosphere surrounding the already tense Anglo-Irish peace process 48 hours before spring holds talks with his British counterpart, Sir Patrick Mayhew, to try to break months of deepening deadlock.

Mr. Spring hopes to persuade the British government to abide by a November plan which said the two governments would seek to call all-party talks by the end of this month.

Britain says Mr. Taylor's UUP and other pro-British groups will not talk to the key Irish nationalist group Sinn Fein until its IRA supporters surrender weapons silenced by a ceasefire 18 months ago.

Mr. Taylor's remarks were a direct challenge to an official Anglo-Irish agreement dating back to 1985 which gave Dublin a key role in the day-to-day affairs of Northern Ireland and a partnership role with Britain in the search for lasting peace.

Britain and Ireland signed a December 1993 joint declaration which persuaded the IRA to call a truce which was matched by Protestant loyalist gunmen who fought to extend British rule.

The UUP deputy leader made his attack because of Mr. Spring's vocal opposition to Unionist-backed British government plans to call elections in Northern Ireland to try to get all sides in the conflict talking about a lasting settlement.

He accused Mr. Spring of being "a mouthpiece for Sinn Fein" which says the elections will effectively veto any chance of lasting change.

The elections to a non-executive assembly fall far short of the all-party negotiations the Irish governments wants Britain to convene to work out an accord between Unionists and Irish nationalists led by Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing.

Mr. Spring said at the weekend that elections would only produce winners and losers and extend the domination of the province's politics by Unionists who want to maintain rule from London.

He argued that negotiations at all-party talks would produce a consensus instead which could be used as the basis for a permanent end to a conflict which killed 3,200 in 25 years.

# China transferred nuclear technology to Pakistan — report

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. intelligence experts have found new evidence that China transferred nuclear arms technology to Pakistan in violation of U.S. law, the Washington Times reported Monday.

State Department officials were expected to confront Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing over his government's apparent transfer of ring magnets — used in gas centrifuges that enrich uranium for weapons — when he arrives here Monday, the newspaper said.

The Clinton administration has downplayed charges of China's involvement in weapons proliferation in the past, saying last year it was seeking clarification from Beijing on reports that it had transferred M-11 missiles to Pakistan.

The Washington Times quoted intelligence sources as saying that the CIA recently notified the State Department that China sold 5,000 ring magnets to the A. Q. Khan Research Laboratory in Kahuta, Pakistan last year.

No reaction was immediately available from the State Department.

The report will likely increase pressure from Congress for sanctions on China, whose relations with the United States have been severely strained over a number of issues — from human rights and Taiwan to Chinese piracy of U.S. intellectual property.

Rescue workers move the bodies of two people killed after a cargo plane crashed into homes near Asuncion killing at least 21 people, most of them children playing an outdoor volleyball match. The plane, a DC-8 aircraft of Colombia's Lineas Aereas Del Caribe, crashed shortly after takeoff (Reuter photo)

## *Plane slams into Paraguayan homes; 22 killed*

MARIANO ROQUE ALONSO, Paraguay (R) — A Colombian cargo plane crashed into homes near Paraguay's capital Sunday, killing at least 22 people, most of them children playing volleyball, said officials and radio reports.

The DC-8 aircraft of Colombia's Lineas Aereas Del Caribe crashed at 2:12 p.m. (1712 GMT), one minute after takeoff, Paraguay's Civil Aviation Authority said.

Officials said at least 22 people were killed, but radio reports put the toll at at least 23. Five people were still missing.

Many of the victims were children and teenagers playing volleyball behind a house in a poor neighbourhood as friends and relatives looked on, rescue workers said.

The three crew members and another man onboard — all Colombians — were killed, the aviation authority said. The fourth man was not identified. Local radio had earlier said the crew members were from the United States and Argentina.

Two people were rescued from the rubble during the afternoon, according to reports. Volunteer firefighters at the site, however, said they that needed a heavy crane to lift part of the wrecked aircraft from on top of a small bar, which they feared might hold several bodies.

Rescue efforts were suspended at 9:30 p.m. (0030 GMT Monday) because of lack of equipment, police said.

The cause of the crash was not immediately known, but witnesses said they saw one of the plane's engines explode before it crashed in the town of Mariano Roque Alonso, 17 kilometres northeast of Asuncion.

Relatives and friends of the victims stood by as onlookers immediately crowded the site of the crash, hampering inexperienced rescue workers and ambulances.

Volunteer firefighters said they found a cockpit voice recording which may contain the crew's last words. But they feared a souvenir-hunter had stolen the black box flight recorder, which may be able explain the cause of the crash. Local radio stations broadcast pleas for the recorder to be returned.

Radio reported that one spectator stole parts of the destroyed fuselage.

The plane had made a technical stop in Asuncion en route to Brazil to pick up car parts, photographic materials and seeds for Colombian importers and international companies, according to Raul Donado, the airline's commercial vice president based in Barranquilla, Colombia.

The plane, built in 1965 by McDonnell Douglas Corp., was bought two years ago by the airline, said Mr. Donado. He added that the company will investigate the crash as soon as possible.

Lineas Aereas Del Caribe last suffered an airplane crash 13 years ago when a DC-6 crashed at Bogota Airport, added Mr. Donado.

# Washington will try to calm Beijing-Taipei tension-report

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. policymakers have decided to warn China, which apparently plans military exercises near Taiwan as the island's presidential elections near, that it should cool the tensions with Taiwan, the Washington Post reported in its Monday editions.

"We plan to tell Beijing that we don't think some of their recent actions are helpful," a U.S official told the newspaper. The identity of the official was not disclosed.

A White House spokesman declined comment on the report.

A number of recent published reports, including the story in the Washington Post, said China planned massive military exercises near Taiwan before it holds presidential elections on March 23. The newspaper said roughly 40 naval vessels and 100 aircraft would simulate amphibious landings.

U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said last week that the United States saw "no imminent threat" to Taiwan but was "monitoring the situation very closely."

The primary U.S. goal, according to a senior U.S. State Department official quoted in the Washington Post "is to get this Taiwan thing calmed down."

The senior official, who was not named, said policymakers decided the United States should warn China that "heightened tensions could lead to miscalculation and accident."

China's upcoming military exercise, because of its size, was destabilising in the eyes of U.S. policymakers, the newspaper said.

Because of the situation, U.S. intelligence-gathering in the region has been bolstered and the Clinton administration has begun a fresh look at how it might respond to an attack on Taiwan, the Post said.

Friction over Taiwan could mean added tensions in U.S.-China ties. Washington and Beijing have disagreed over numerous trade issues and China's human-rights record.

The U.S. message would begin to be expressed this week during meetings in Washington of Li Zhaoxing, a deputy foreign minister, and senior U.S. officials, the Washington Post said. Mr. Li would be warned that Beijing's failure to halt widespread pirating of U.S. trademarked goods could bring costly sanctions.

However, it said the White House had rejected a request by U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor to set a deadline for halting the illegal production.

Military exercises by China apparently were aimed at underming support for President Lee Teng-Hui and dissauding him from trying to boost the island's international image.

Meanwhile Taiwan's foreign minister reiterated Monday that policy towards rival China took priority over policies towards the rest of the world, signalling a softening of the island's attitude to Beijing.

"Mainland policy is a higher priority than foreign policy," Foreign Minister Fredrick Chien told state television.

Mr. Chien's comments followed a similar remark last month in which he said the island's relations with China were more important than its efforts to climb out of diplomatic isolation.

China and Taiwan, rivals since a civil war in 1949, have seen renewed tension since Taiwan's President Lee Teng-Hui made a landmark visit to the United States in June last year.

China regards Taiwan as a renegade province that is not entitled to foreign relations, and it has tried to isolate the island diplomatically.

Beijing has vowed to attack Taiwan should it declare independence and has tried to intimidate it by conducting a series of missile tests near the island.

It has indefinitely postponed high-level talks with Taiwan, though Taipei's state radio said Sunday meetings might resume after the island holds presidential elections on March 23.

Taiwan has maintained that it should pursue a "pragmatic diplomacy", in which it tries to shed its diplomatic isolation despite pressure from China.

## *Attack on Guatemala president mars start of Pope trip*

GUATEMALA CITY (R) — Pope John Paul starts a week-long trip to Latin America Monday, his message of peace overshadowed by a failed attack on his first host, Guatemalan President Alvaro Arzu.

The Pope's chartered jet is due to land in Guatemala City at 4:30 pm local time (22:30 GMT), with the festive local atmosphere soured by tension following Sunday's attempt on Mr. Arzu's life.

Mr. Arzu escaped unhurt when a lone driver in a pickup truck tried twice to ram him and his wife as they rode horseback in the colonial town of Antigua near the capital, government officials said.

Interior Minister Rodolfo Mendoza insisted the attack — which he described as an assassination attempt — would not affect the Pope's visit to Guatemala.

"We hope it won't be more than an isolated incident," he said. "Of course since we are talking about the security of the president and the visit of his holiness is so near we are not ruling out any hypothesis."

Asked whether security would be reinforced for the Papal visit, he replied: "Of course".

Worsening the climate further, rioting broke out Sunday in the town of Santa Lucia De Cotzumalguapa, 95 kilometres from Guatemala City when police intervened to stop a mob from lynching four men alleged to have raped three women on a bus in full view of passengers.

In fury, the mob set the local police station on fire and troops had to be called out to quell the riot.

The riot and reported assassination attempt in Guatemala came as stark reminders of the violence and lawlessness which continue to plague Central America, nearly 10 years after the region's leaders signed a peace agreement.

Nowhere are the wounds of the past more keenly felt than in Guatemala, where an army purge of suspected leftists over the past 35 years has killed more than 100,000 people and wiped entire villages off the map.

The Pontiff's 69th foreign trip will also take him to Nicaragua, El Salvador and Venezuela.

## Clinton advisor tries to reassure Seoul over U.S. aid to North Korea

SEOUL (AFP) — A senior U.S. official Monday tried to ease South Korean jitters by playing down Washington's unilateral decision to grant North Korea $2 million in aid to alleviate chronic food shortages.

Anthony Lake, President Bill Clinton's national security adviser, also told South Korean Foreign Minister Gong Ro-Myung that Washington would maintain close consultations with Seoul on any moves to seek normalisation with Pyongyang, Mr. Gong's office said.

"Mr. Lake clarified the U.S. policy that South Korea would not be sidelined in talks with North Korea," the office said, as Seoul warned its own citizens against unauthorised aid efforts.

With no signs of detente from its hostile neighbour, South Korea has urged Washington and Tokyo to slow down approaches to Pyongyang, insisting the North's food situation should be vetted first.

U.N. officials say several million people face possible starvation in the Communist North. But South Korean officials suspect North Korea may be exaggerating.

Mr. Lake described last week's U.S. pledge to give $2 million in grain aid to North Korea through the World Food Programme, a U.N. agency, as a humanitarian gesture.

Mr. Gong did not oppose Washington's "indirect humanitarian aid of limited scale" to Pyongyang, but made clear Seoul's objection to large-scale aid so long as tension on the Korean peninsula remained, ministry officials said.

Mr. Lake did not mention any new U.S. moves to ease economic sanctions against Pyongyang, they said.

Washington promised to ease its decades-long trade embargo on Pyongyang in 1994 when North Korea agreed to freeze its controversial nuclear programme.

Mr. Lake later Monday met with South Korean President Kim Young-Sam. He will continue his consultations in Tokyo, where Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto has also hinted at offering food aid to North Korea.

Washington earlier donated $225,000 to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), which followed the delivery of 650,000 tonnes of rice, worth some $50 million, last year by South Korea and Japan.

At an annual meeting of overseas mission chiefs Monday, Mr. Gong said South Korea will "do its utmost" to help alleviate a food crisis and other problems in the North if it takes reciprocal steps.

"The biggest challenge facing us this year is how we can effectively deal with the volatile North Korean issue," Mr. Gong said, saying Pyongyang faces both food shortages and political instability.

Seoul has reacted sensitively to individual donations to hunger-stricken North Koreans from the South, warning that all private aid should go through a unified government channnel.

On Monday, the National Council of Churches of South Korea announced a plan to visit North Korea next month to assess its food needs, but met resistance from the government.

"Individual activities by some civilian groups don't help to improve inter-Korean relations," an official said, adding that legal measures could be taken to stop the trip.

Piero Calvi-Parisetti, who headed a Red Cross aid delegation to North Korea, said last week in Geneva that there was "considerable controversy" in Pyongyang over whether more appeals for aid should be issued.

Mr. Calvi-Parisetti told Japan's Kyodo News Agency that the North's military was concerned about "aid with political strings," adding the South Korean Red Cross was asked not to send any more instant noodles with brand names on them.

"There is certainly sensitivity and the situation is not easy," Calvi-Parisett was quoted as saying.

## *U.S. official sees new U.N. mandate in Angola*

NEGAGE, Angola (R) — The head of the U.S. Agency for International Development said Sunday he was confident the United Nations would renew its peacekeeping mandate to Angola on Feb. 8.

"Our latest information is that the United Nations will renew its mandate in Angola...and will be looking for a three month renewal," U.S. AID Administrator Brian Atwood told Reuters.

Mr. Atwood, on a four-day visit to Angola, spent the day visiting of a camp at Negage where fighters of the former rebel movement UNITA are being demobilised and a tour of the government-held towns in the north.

Angola's 20-year civil war ended in 1994 but implementation of the peace agreement, including the disarming of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA guerrillas, has been an unsteady, stop-and-go affair.

"I was encouraged with what we saw, but we have to continue to put pressure on the process. The international community has to show there are benefits to peace," Mr. Atwood said.

He said it was crucial that funding was now spent on reconstructing the country. "The issue here is development aid. We have a larger stake in making this work," he said.

In Negage, Mr. Atwood met UNITA Vice-President Antonio Sebastiao Dembo who assured him UNITA was sincere about disarming its troops.

"The quartering and demobilisation is the key. Once we get past this phase you will see," Mr. Dembo said.

Mr. Atwood travelled across UNITA lines to Uige, which is surrounded by UNITA-held areas. Vice-Governor Samuel Joao listed the town's main problems as UNITA control of access roads, malnutrition, a disrupted school system and sleeping sickness.

"The biggest problem is free circulation of people. I hope your presence here will help the situation. The food we get here comes by air and the road from Luanda is controlled by UNITA," he complained.

In Malange, a coffee town held by the government and surrounded by UNITA areas, Mr. Atwood saw thousands of people queue for rations of beans and oil and was given a briefing on mine clearing.

## Quake-ravaged China town jolted by tremors

BEIJING (R) — Hundreds of aftershocks Monday jolted terrified survivors of China's deadliest earthquake in eight years as they huddled in freezing temperatures in the streets of southwestern Lijiang, officials said.

Yunnan provincial officials raced to airlift quilts, tents and medicine to hundreds of thousands of people left homeless by Saturday's tremor and to bury the bodies of victims and dead animals to prevent the spread of disease, officials said.

"This was the worst earthquake we have suffered," one Lijiang disaster coordination official said by telephone.

An aftershock measuring 6.0 on the Richter Scale rocked the remote, mountainous region of Lijiang, Monday just 30 hours after the main tremor with a magnitude of 7.0 hit the district Saturday, killing about 250 people and injuring 15,000, officials said.

At mid-morning, a tremor of force 4.8 jolted the scenic district, 2,000 kilometres south of Beijing. The region is renowned for the beauty of its scenery, with ancient ethnic Naxi villages nestled at the foot of snow-capped Jade Dragon Snow Mountain.

"It was terrifying," a local official said by telephone. "The earth just shakes and shakes. When will it stop?"

More than 312 aftershocks have been recorded, causing no new casualties but damaging buildings already shaken or shattered by Saturday's tremor, which one official described as Lijiang's deadliest since 1474. More aftershocks were expected.

More than 186,000 homes have collapsed, leaving hundreds of thousands of people homeless. Those whose homes are intact are too frightened to return to them, officials said.

"It doesn't matter whether people still have homes or they don't," the official said. "Everyone is too scared to go inside. Everyone is living in the streets."

Yunnan Governor He Zhiqiang has issued 10 directives to rescue workers, with the top priorities being burial of bodies, caring for the injured, preventing the spread of disense and "pots to cook and rice in the pots" for the homeless, officials said.

At least 15,000 people had been injured, including 3,800 seriously, in Lijiang local officials said. Several villages were obliterated.

Rescue teams evacuated 22 foreign tourists stranded at Tiger Leaping Gorge on the Yangtze River. One American nun whose name was not immediately known was seriously injured, a provincial official said by telephone from the capital, Kunming.

Four tourists visiting the scenic site were slightly hurt.

Government officials, backed by troops and the Chinese Red Cross, have launched an airlift to the shattered district, which is desperately short of medical supplies and tents.

The most seriously injured have been flown to hospitals in Kunming and all local hospitals were full, an official at the Lijiang Disaster Coordination Centre said.

The Red Cross Society of China appealed Sunday for international aid.

The provincial government has allocated 10 million yuan ($1.2 million) in aid to Lijiang, which officials say is gripped by a rare cold snap with temperatures plunging to a record minus 12 degrees Celsius overnight.

"One of the biggest problems is that we don't have enough tents for the homeless," a Lijiang official said. "And it is very cold outside."

More than 2,000 soldiers and police still scoured the rubble of mud brick homes in mountain villages, amid fears the death toll could rise to over 300.

In the Lijiang county seat, one in 10 houses in the old quarter collapsed.

## U.S. cold snap threatens oranges, leaves many powerless

MIAMI (R) — Bone-chilling Arctic weather threatened Florida's citrus crops Sunday as the cold snap that has swept across most of the United States spread to traditionally warmer areas.

Citrus growers in central Florida raced to pick fruit as weather forecasters predicted the thermometer could touch near-record lows later in the day.

"They are out there picking, trying to get all the fruit that they can into the processing plants and packing houses," said Bobby McKeowen, a spokesman for Florida Citrus Mutual, which represents about 12,000 state growers.

Forecasters said temperatures near Orlando could dive below 24 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 4 Celsius) for several hours, threatening oranges, grapefruits and other fruits.

In North and South Carolina, hundreds of thousands of people were left without power to endure the savage cold.

North Carolina Gov. Jim Hunt declared the snow, sleet and freezing rain the worst natural disaster in many years and asked President Bill Clinton to declare a state of emergency.

About 32 emergency shelters opened across the region in gyms, churches, libraries and fire stations.

## South Korean ruling party in turmoil before convention

SEOUL (R) — South Korea's ruling party has been plunged into a new corruption scandal involving former President Chun Doo Hwan on the eve of a convention aimed at polishing its image before national elections.

Mr. Chun has grabbed the spotlight from Tuesday's gathering of the New Korea Party with allegations he handed out $125 million to politicians and other influential figures, including journalists, to prepare a political comeback.

Analysts said Monday the allegations could weaken President Kim Young-Sam, whose anti-corruption campaign has snared Mr. Chun and another former president, Roh Tae-Woo.

"Chun's revelation must be very damaging to President Kim Young-Sam," said Shin Jung-Hyun, head of Kyunghee University's College of Politics and Economics.

He said the allegations had cast doubts over the integrity of influential party members, and this would rub off on Mr. Kim who is also party president.

The New Korea Party is a hodge-podge of political groupings with loyalties to figures such as Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh, based partly on regional and military ties.

Analysts said the allegations exposed these divisions ahead of a convention intended by Mr. Kim as a show of unity following a series of corruption scandals that have ripped through the old political and business establishments.

Renewed talk of financial sleaze would also undermine the meeting's message of a new beginning for the nation.

"The convention is very meaningful as it will herald the party's complete severance of ties with disgraced past rulers, morally as well as physically," New Korea Party spokesman Kee Myun-Jung said last week.

Mr. Kim was planning the party meeting as a victory parade for a number of nationally respected politicians he had lured into the ruling camp to spearhead its campaign for general elections in April.

His biggest catch was his former Prime Minister Lee Hoi-Chang, billed as South Korea's "Mr Clean", who quit the administration over disagreements with Mr. Kim.

Mr. Lee, who was not previously a party member, is expected to be appointed campaign manager during Tuesday's convention.

The ruling party was thrashed in local polls last year and had been widely seen as heading for another disaster in April.

However, Mr. Kim has clawed back waning public support with his handling of the corruption scandals embroiling his predecessors and the new additions to the party were seen as further bolstering the election appeal of his party.

Some analysts saw Mr. Chun's move as designed to inflict maximum damage on Mr. Kim. Mr. Chun has accused the president of waging a vendetta against him.

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## Two-pronged mission

**PRIME MINISTER Abdul Karim Al Kabariti has a two-pronged mission to accomplish in a relatively short time, and he knows exactly how to go about doing it. On the internal front he wants to institutionalise the function of government, to reform the economy and to enhance democracy. On the external front he wants to put Jordan's relations with the Arab countries, Israel, the European Union and the U.S. on the right tracks.**

**Mr. Kabariti on Monday told his ministers during his Cabinet's first session that each of the ministers need to excel in his or her particular domain and that their performance would ultimately be reflected in the people's attitude towards the government. The prime minister, who also holds the powerful portfolio of foreign affairs, would of course be devoting a considerable amount of time and energy to ensure that Jordan emerges stronger in the new regional order. The country that has always assumed a moderate, peace-loving posture and that placed itself in the past decades firmly on the side of the "free world" deserves to be recognised for what it has been and what it could represent in the future.**

**Mr. Kabariti, a shrewd operator on both the domestic and regional levels, will have to carefully but decisively manoeuvre the country into more openness, pluralism and democracy on the internal front and a more assertive role on the external front. He recognises very well that the old methods of the past two decades are being discarded all over the world. Governments no longer claim monopoly over the economy or information. Controlled economies failed and the motto of the 1990s is to sell to the private sector. All the countries of the region, including socialist Syria, are heading in that direction.**

**Jordan's role in the region, His Majesty King Hussein has made clear in many occasions, should be based on a model to be emulated by the rest of the Arab countries. This requires not only a democratic example but also economic successes and a free media.**

**The fact that Mr. Kabariti overcrowded his Cabinet with parliamentarians will prove to be an asset in the months ahead. Not only will his 21 fellow deputies ensure him a comfortable vote of confidence to start with, but will cushion his government whenever it embarks on major policy decisions, whether internal or external.**

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

DISCUSSING THE Syrian Israeli talks near Washington, Tareq Masarweh, a columnist for Al Ra'i, said unlike Syria, Israel is optimistic about the outcome of the meetings, but we see very poor signs of a breakthrough so far. Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres seems to be overoptimistic about the outcome of these talks, to a degree that he is contemplating moving the elections date in Israel ahead, for May rather than October, according to the writer. He hopes to capitalise on the expected good results from these talks and secure a major victory for his Labour Party in the general elections, noted the writer. For its part, Syria seems not to be in a hurry for the simple reason that it believes the Israelis, whether governed by the Labour or the opposition Likud Party, hold the same views across the negotiating table with them, added the writer. Furthermore, he said, Syria is not convinced by the American promises for aid after signing peace with Israel, and has learnt the lesson from other cases and other pledges given to the Arabs by Washington which later requested Europe and Japan to foot the bill. The writer said that in light of the positions of the two sides, one can only conclude that a comprehensive peace in the region is still far away and out of reach.

A WRITER for Al Dustour discussed the question of unemployment among university graduates in Jordan, blaming the problem partly on the advertisements appearing in the local press and partly on the lack of guidance to the young. Huda Fakhouri said that most of the job advertisements in the press require engineers, pharmacists or computer science graduates or qualified secretaries with fluency in English. Seldom does one see ads that require veterinarians or agricultural engineers, which reflects the fact that agricultural development in Jordan is nearly forgotten, said the writer. Noting that nearly one quarter of the people in Jordan are youths studying in schools or colleges, the writer suggested that the concerned authorities and universities should create teams of qualified persons who can provide advice and guidance to the young generation about their future careers based on a thorough knowledge of present and future local labour market requirements of professionals and tradesmen. Such a measure, she added, is bound to help the youth embark on trades currently filled by guest workers, and so avoid the fearful spectre of unemployment and poverty.

## The View from Fourth Circle

**By Rami G. Khouri**

# Luxury, junk, America and the world

WASHINGTON, D.C. — It only takes a few days of reading the newspapers, visiting the bookshops and talking to people here to appreciate the peculiar mood of cynicism, anger and contentiousness that defines much of the American society today. I say peculiar because this remains, at its core, an extraordinarily impressive, magnanimous and equitable society — founded on principles of democratic governance and personal self-improvement that have attracted immigrants from other lands for the last two and a quarter centuries. Perhaps no other society in the world since the Roman Empire has attracted such envy and a desire for full citizenry status from other parts of the globe. The cynicism and distrust that plague America today, therefore, are a paradox, an expression of ailment among health, and of fear among confidence.

People such as ourselves in Jordan and other parts of the world need to assess and to understand the causes of this paradox in the American culture, because whether we like it or not the basic defining forces and values of America are already having an impact on our societies. This process of Americanisation of the world has been driven to date primarily by the powers of the commercial market — the universal attraction of products such as Pepsi Cola, Michael Jordan basketball, Nike sneakers and Burger King hamburgers, and the parallel marketing mentality that makes salesmanship and commerce the defining values of modern culture because they are the core generators of jobs, income and a sense of security for the future.

Now, the Americanisation of the world is being speeded up by a new force that we have to contend with — the official, explicit global promotion of national values that have defined the American experience, notably democratic governance, free market economies, personal rights, and escalating consumerism. These are not being promoted only by the natural spread of consumer products to a willing global audience, as happened with American soft drinks, casual clothing and fast food in the last half a century. They are being deliberately promoted by government-to-government policies that have a strong impact around the world because of the need for most countries in the developing south to adopt economic adjustment policies.

We are experiencing this process in Jordan in a very typical way. This is not an unusual process in historical terms, as we can see from our own ancient landscape. Repeatedly throughout history, strong and creative cultures sent their products and their values to the rest of the world in ripples of commercial penetration or political conquest. We in the Middle East absorbed such impulses from Europe in ancient times, and we also sent such impulses to Europe and Asia during the glory days of Arab/Islamic civilisation. It is a normal and probably healthy development that cultures should influence each other as we are being influenced today by American culture.

The larger question today, though, is about the ultimate consequence of American cultural and national values. We are well-advised to look deeper into the American experience to appreciate what it is that we are absorbing, and to reflect on the implications of this dynamic for the future of our society and people. This raises questions about America, and it also raises questions about Jordan, and, by extension, the entire Third World.

There are many different ideas about why Americans are so cynical and negative today. A common complaint of Americans is that they feel powerless to influence the direction and nature of their lives, that they are caught up in a fast-paced economic machine that prompts them to produce and consume, but that leaves them with little time, energy or money to do anything more meaningful. Many Americans are fearful of losing their jobs or health insurance, and they express deep fears about poverty, violence, racial tensions, drug abuse, and the many other problems that plague society here. It seems to me that a common denominator that can explain many of these anxieties is the very extreme manifestation of two key principles that define the U.S.: individual liberty and free market capitalism.

Taken to an extreme, these two principles tend to dehumanise people who find themselves slowly separated from institutions that once protected and defined them — the family, the church, the neighbourhood, the company that employed them, and other such forces. The triumph of the commercial marketplace as the sacred ethos of American culture today is probably heavily to blame for the problems that Americans complain about (though it is also a key to many of the good aspects of American culture, such as corporate philanthropy, technological innovation, quality higher education and others).

Out challenge vis-à-vis the phenomenon of contemporary America is to see clearly what America is sending towards us in terms of values and defining national principles. Some of these are constructive and noble, others are destructive — as Americans themselves proclaim so passionately in the very exciting debate that is taking place here on issues such as multiculturalism, race, gender, the status of children and the fate of cities, the homeless and the poor.

The danger that we should heed in the Third World is not that we will absorb some American values and customs, because such an absorption can be constructive if it is selective and judicious. The danger is that the wholesale application to traditional, Third World societies of free market capitalism and unbridled individualism is very likely to shatter the sense of social solidarity and inter-tribal cohesion that has always defined our societies and given them relative stability and durability. Relatively poor, environmentally fragile societies such as ours in Jordan are likely to fragment very quickly if they suddenly operate according to the American system of free market, individualistic capitalism.

We see danger signs already in Jordan that parallel some of the worst problems in the U.S. It is already obvious that solidarity relationships in Jordan are changing, mainly in response to the government's need to make severe economic adjustments. The government, unable to meet the basic needs of all the people, seems inclined to move in the direction of U.S. modern history: the bottom segment of poor and vulnerable people are left as wards of charitable societies, non-governmental organisations, the religious charities, and multinational aid agencies; and the segment of rich people are left to buy their basic needs (schooling, health care) from the free market economy. The remaining middle is a large class in the U.S., but in the Third World the remaining middle is little more than the government's civil servants and armed forces.

There is a real danger that the total triumph of free market capitalism in countries such as ours will not only see a widening of the gap between rich and poor, it may also effectively shatter the cohesion of the modern state — because the state, having been forced to adjust to economic realities, may end up being only the sum total of its civil servants, security services, and families and relatives. The rich take care of themselves, the poor do whatever they can to survive, and both of them have little to do with the services of the modern state, the middle segment of the population is the state and the government, serving and protecting itself.

This is a worst case scenario, to be sure, but I mention it only because some of these trends are already apparent in the United States. We would be irresponsible to ignore the totality of the modern American experience or to fail to absorb its full lessons, because much of what happens in America happens in other parts of the world soon after. This would suggest that we in the Arab World need to assess American culture and political economy with far more diligence and objectivity than has been the case to date. We have traditionally viewed the U.S. with materialistic admiration or political disdain, but this kind of approach is too simplistic for the challenges of today and tomorrow. The intense debate about America within America is a healthy sign of the best aspects of American culture, and one that we should appreciate and even emulate — if the process of cross-cultural interaction is to be mutually satisfying to all those who engage in it, rather than merely a global marketplace which produces luxury and comfort for some and junkyards and slums for others.

# Pope to visit a forgotten Central America

**By Philip Pullella**
*Reuter*

VATICAN CITY — When Pope John Paul I visited Central America in 1983, it was a cold war battleground whose civil strife and guerrilla wars polarised the superpowers.

It was also a Christian battlefield that pitted idealistic "liberation theologians" against comfortable roman catholic conservatives aligned with the political and military class.

Within a few days, the Pope returns to a Central America the world, and many members of his church, have largely forgotten.

Thirteen years on he will try to remind the world that although the killing fields are largely part of the past and democracy is being consolidated, the region is still ridden with problems such as poverty, illiteracy and crime.

The 75-year-old Pope will visit three central American countries — Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador — from Feb. 5 to 9 before making a two-day stop in Venezuela.

The Pope has visited all four countries before but this time their citizens will see a slower, aged Pope who has had a spate of health problems in the past four years.

All of the countries are overwhelmingly Catholic but as in the rest of Latin America the church has been losing ground to fast-growing fundamentalist Evangelical movements, or sects.

"These countries (in central America) still have the scent of war about them and the Pope hopes he can help and inspire them to move away from the past and towards reconciliation," said Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls.

Keeping democracy and reforms on track has not been easy since the 1987 Central American peace accords in which presidents committed their countries to ceasefires and dialogue.

The Pontiff's first Central American stop, Guatemala, will be perhaps the most difficult. It is there that democracy is probably most delicate and where the violent past is most murky.

Human rights groups say some 100,000 people were killed in government anti-insurgency campaigns there in the 1980s.

President Alvaro Arzu, a businessman elected in January, has promised to conclude peace talks to end the 35-year-old civil war within his first year in office.

Mr. Arzu, who defeated a candidate who was the hand-picked proxy for ex-dictator General Efrain Rios Montt, has also promised to keep reformist elements of Guatemala's powerful army at the top of the military hierarchy.

It was only last year that Guatemala officially abolished a 24,000-member, army-backed paramilitary network which human rights groups have accused of abuses.

The Pope will be based in Guatemala during the Central American part of his 69th foreign trip and make day trips.

Nicaragua, which the Pope visits on Feb. 7, was run by the Soviet-backed Sandinistas when he last visited.

The Sandinistas, who were ousted in 1990 elections, visibly angered the Pontiff in 1983 by trying to drown out his homily with political slogans at mass.

The chanters, including then-President Daniel Ortega, wanted him to denounce the U.S.-backed "contra" rebels fighting the Sandinistas. Their war cost some 30,000 dead and wounded.

Cardinal Miquel Obando y Bravo, the Nicaraguan Catholic leader, called the incident "painful" and added: "I don't believe the Catholic people will allow it to be repeated."

# Colour of blood — decency vs. discrimination

**By G. H. Jansen**

THE "BLOOD SCANDAL" which broke in Israel at the end of January goes rumbling on. It erupted when, by chance, news emerged that the Blood Bank of the Magen David Adom (the Red Star of David) was routinely discarding, before use, blood donated by Ethiopian Jews living in Israel. Because the skin colouration of these immigrants ranges from brown to near-black, the "blood scandal" became a racial scandal — so much so that the Organisation of African Unity contemplated a resolution charging that "Zionism is racism."

The reason given for discarding Ethiopian blood was that Ethiopians have a higher incidence of the HIV virus, which leads to AIDS, than other Israelis. It is claimed that Ethiopian immigrant blood is 50 times more likely to be infected with HIV than the blood of other Israelis (as well as 20-25 times more likely to be infected with two types of hepatitis as well as syphilis).

The medical case against using Ethiopian Jewish blood for transfusions is irrefutable and the blood bank doctors are rightly unapologetic, but Ethiopian Jews were so outraged at this example of what appears to be racial prejudice that 20,000 of them and their supporters staged a violent demonstration outside the office of the prime minister in Jerusalem during a Jan. 28 cabinet meeting. They had to be dispersed after casualties inflicted on both demonstrators and police by the use of water canon, teargas and baton charges.

Their charge against the government was that Ethiopian donors were not told beforehand that because their blood might be infected (and therefore unwanted) their donations would not be used.

Officials argued that to openly admit that Ethiopian blood was discarded would have added insult to injury.

Once this scandal was revealed, Israeli authorities were promptly, albeit abjectly, apologetic, and an official Commission of Enquiry was set up under the chairmanship of former Israeli President Yitzhak Navon, himself a Sephardic or Eastern Jew.

The popular uproar over blood discrimination was fuelled by President Ezer Weizman, who invited Ethiopian Jews to the presidential residence in order to tell them that the doors of his house were always open to them. But too late. Such is the anger against such discrimination that there are calls, including from white Israelis, for the dismissal of the director of the blood bank, who ordered that the blood be discarded. He has been suspended, pending the findings of the commission.

Israeli commentators are asserting that Ethiopian anger over the blood scandal is the culmination of a long series of discriminatory practices against the Ethiopians, also endured by other coloured immigrants, like Indian Jews. The main complaint of these minority communities was that the official religious establishment in Israel, the Rabbinate, did not accept them as "proper" Jews as centuries of isolation from mainstream Judaism meant that some of their religious practices had diverged and become unorthodox.

And since, to use the words of the philosopher-historian Arnold Toynbee, Judaism is "a fossilised faith", its established orthodox rabbinate is rigid and dogmatic in its beliefs and practices — so much so that official rabbis have refused to officiate at the religious ceremonies of these immigrants unless they were "converted" to orthodox Judaism by orthodox rabbis.

The brown-skinned unorthodox Jews also tended to be given housing in development towns where Arab Jews have been settled, away from the white-skinned core of the country, on a strip of Israel stretching along the coast from Ashdod, south of Haifa.

To make matters worse, there was no urgency in calling up these Jews for military service where they would have to live side by side with Ashkenazi recruits. And the promotion of the coloured immigrants has also been delayed.

Ethiopian children are compelled to attend to religious schools so they can be "Judaised", although their parents often prefer to send them to the secular state schools. Ethiopian activists also claim these children do not have equal educational opportunities, and as a result, are forced to accept menial jobs.

Because of such discriminatory practices, some Indian Jews left Israel, returning to their native country. But under pressure from Zionist recruiters and propagandists they gave Israel a second chance, only to find discrimination still prevalent upon returning to Israel. When they tried to return to India a second time, the government said: "No, enough is enough."

It takes little persuasion to get Israelis of Indian origin to pour out their grievances to visitors.

Some Israelis agonise over the blood scandal because the plight of the Ethiopians is the direct consequence of Zionist interference in their lives and of the Israeli "Law of Return" which holds that all Jews may (and indeed should) "return" to the Jewish homeland that grants them citizenship automatically.

For millennia, scattered groups of Jews lived in remote areas of Ethiopia, in the northern region of Gondar. When a Marxist military dictatorship, under Mengistu Haile Mariam, came to power in Addis Ababa, it was thought wise to get the Jews out of the country.

The ensuing Ethiopian Jewish exodus happened in three waves because of the difficulty of actually moving the Jews out of a country that did not want them to go. Also, surrounding Arab countries did not want to permit Jewish immigrants to Israel permission to transit by land or air.

These two factors led to months of delay at the assembly point in Addis Ababa, where immigrants were provided with financial assistance from world Jewry.

Unfortunately some of that money was spent in the brothels of Addis Ababa, a city filled with such establishments, and thus it did not take long for Ethiopian Jews to be infected with HIV, which is rife among the city's prostitutes.

But even if Ethiopian Jews had not been enticed to migrate to the Promised Land and forced to wait in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopians still would have experienced the "normal" discriminations suffered by other coloured Jews.

One might question why Israel doesn't handle its blood donation problems the way most other countries do: by testing blood donors before they donate. This practice may be expensive, as some claim, but such a consideration should not arise in Israel where 4.5 million people receive $6.3 billion from the U.S. every single year.

# Imelda Marcos: I am still in love with Ferdinand

By Daphne Barak

SHE'S IN the headlines again. Actually, she never left the headlines. Imelda Marcos — at first the the wife, and then the colourful widow of Ferdinand Marcos, the ousted ruler of the Philipines — has become part of international folklore. After all, how many women in the world can flaunt the fact that they're know by their first name alone? Yvana, Jaja, and yes — Imelda....

Actually during these very days, a legal process is going on in Hong Kong, regarding hundreds of millions of dollars that are waiting in a Swiss bank account. Imelda claims they belong to her and to her late husband. In the Philipines, they think differently. In the meantime, the money is being held by the bank.

**Question**: Imedla, what is actually going on there?

**Answer**: Don't ask. I'm furious. My lawyer, James Linn, went there, although I haven't authorised him to do so. But he's man of honour. The court instructed him, and he obeyed. The bank in Switzerland took some very grave liberties. Cory Akino, who didn't win the elections, they decided to negotiate with her. Why with her? The court in New York acquitted me of guilt regarding the charge of stealing (Marcos was proclaimed innocent together with Adnan Kashoggi in a New York trial in 1990). Right after the acquittal in New York, my lawyer hurried to Switzerland. Can you imagine? They didn't give him the money. They said it was being negotiated with Akino. Now, if I didn't steal it, why are they negotiating with her?

Q: Why is the present legal process being held in Hong Kong?

A: Well, I ask you! This is an insult to the Philipines. As if we're some banana republic... Those same conspirators who brought legal proceedings against me in America, now they have brought the negotiations to Hong Kong...

Q: Imelda, that sounds a bit paranoid. Rudolf Juliani the Mayor of New York, and the district attorney during the Marcos trial brought you to trial in Manhattan. What's the connection between that and Hong Kong?

A: There is a connection. There are connections between the people who have been trying for years to bring me down. It's not only that they haven't managed to bring me down, they've even strengthened me. See, they tried to prevent me from returning to my country, they tried to fake the elections, but you see, I'm a member in the Congress...

Q: How long is your present term as a member of the Congress?

A: Until 1998. And (Cory) Akino wasn't elected at all... Three days ago besearch was published in the Philippines, according to which the support of Ramos (President of the Philippines and an opponent of Marcos) has gone down by 12 per cent. In contrast, most people in the Philipines think, according to the research, that Marcos was a hero, he helped the Philippine's people...

Q: Who published the research?

A: "Someone who... who didn't even support Marcos. A day after the publication of the research, Akino was interviewed and declared: 'Mrs. Marcos, return the money already!' How am I supposed to return it if they don't return it to me?

So, I've had enough!, and I made a statement saying: 'For God's sake, Cori (Akino), maybe the time has come for us to work together for the sake of the Philippine's people, so either you will put up with it, or you will shut up...

Q: How much money exactly is involved?

A: Half a billion (dollars).

Q: Pardon me?

A: Half a billion dollars. And I have the documents proving the money belonged to Marcos.

Q: Where from? How did he make such an amount of money?

A: Well, you know...

Q: No!

A: He dealt in gold, and in valuable medalions. Everything is documented.

Q: Half a billion dollars, that's a lot of interest. Who gets the interest?

A: The bank in Switzerland, of course.

Q: What was the result of the legal process in Hong Kong?

A: A great big failure! It was simply for the sake of public relations. They wanted to show the affair was being dealt with.

Q: Don't you get tired of fighting like that for years? After all, you're not a young woman.

A: You know, for ten years, every time I was offered a compromise — I answered: 'The reputation, the honour of my late husband is at stake. I won't compromise over his honour. Period.'

Maybe if there weren't so many wars to wage, it would be dull... it's what keeps me young.

Q: This is also the place to compliment you on your young appearance.

A: True, true! It's (the fights, the trials) better than plastic surgery. It keeps me constantly on my guard, ready for a battle.

Q: Where do you live today?

A: I have a huge house. But it's too large for a woman alone, so I only use it for receptions, for parties. On a daily basis, I prefer living in an apartment. Without Marcos, what's the point of expansive living conditions?

Q: In the past, when we talked, you used to speak of Marcos in the present tense, as if he was still alive. Does that still happen to you?

A: You know, I can talk to him and hear his answer. I still live with him. You know what I mean, don't you? I know it sounds strange, but try to understand.

(Ferdinand Marcos met Imelda when she was 19, a Beauty Queen of the Philipppines. In Imelda's life and in her stories, truth and legend are mixed without distrubance. Then came 20 years of luxurious parties with world leaders, while the couple ruled the Philippines. Bank accounts were opened in Switzerland carrying their names. And, there were the 3,000 pairs of shoes that Imelda put on, or just kept in the closet. But one day it was all over).

Ferdinand was elected again for president. I remember it as if it happened yesterday. Fredinand was always elected. Then suddenly people started to scream. I didn't understand what was going on. Nancy (Reagan) called me. She said: "Take your children and come over — everything will be alright." Nancy lied. I believed her. I didn't know it will take so long until I come back. I never realised I would be put on trial in the country where Nancy invited me to.

Q: There are still dozens of Philippines trials going on against you.

A: There are about 200 cases against me...

Q: Two hundred?

A: Yes, and there are new ones everyday. This is the new government policy, to among me. In most of the cases, I win. But every week, sometimes every week, sometimes everyday I have to be in court. It's a physical burden. It exhausts me.

Q: What are you sued for exactly?

A: Don't ask! About associations I've established while I served as the first lady of the Philippines. You see, first they exiled me and my husband — and now they try to judge me for things I did, within my job, to advance the Philippine people. Our budget, that has never changed in 20 years of ruling, has been 500 million pesos. Korazon Aquino, who has ruled after us, has spent 3 trillion pesos, and nobody is giving her a trial. Why is that?

Q: It seems to me, Imelda, that you are being judged all over the world, also for living extravagantly, luxurious dresses, dinners, 3,000 pairs of shoes.

A: Look, it's time we clear these points once and for all: I have stood, by the side of the president, at the head of a proud nation. How exactly did you expect me to entertain international figures? By wearing rage? By not serving the best food? After all, I brought pride to the Philippine people.

Q: 3,000 pairs of shoes! — How did that bring pride to the Philippine people?

A: Well, believe it or not, I had no idea about the number of the pairs. I supported the industry and the manufacturers in the Philippines. In every place I went I received presents from proud manufacturers who wanted to show me their products. Most of the pairs don't even fit my size. So I didn't wear them, but kept them, for respect for those who took the trouble to produce them.

Q: Did the world leaders, whom you've entertained in luxury ever repay you in your hard times? Do they keep in touch with you?

A: Yes, some of them do keep in touch. Some of them send me their speeches. You know, I've always felt that us women have a very special role in the world. Our first role in the world is to be a mother. When you're a mother, you love and hug. That's how a leader should behave with his subjects. As a woman, I always found common language with world leaders, and I could influence them more easily.

Q: During your trial in New York, you've told me of your meetings with Saddam Hussein. You found him extremely nice, at the time...

A: He sends me his mediations, his thoughts, his ideas. Yes, I found him quite nice at the time. He behaved that way to me. Isn't it true that today, you find it difficult to think so?

Q: You also told me, then, about Muammar Qadhafi's attempts to court you...

A: (Delighted): Yes, he was enchanted with me so, that he offered Ferdinand camels for me. Many camels... Later he brought me the Koran and started teaching me the Islamic religion.

Q: Who else keeps in touch with you?

A: The royal family in Thailand are very nice to me. Also others. I wanted, for example, to attend King Baudoin's funeral — but they didn't let me leave the Philippines.

Q: With a reality of inability to move, daily trials, don't you miss the good life?

A: But the best part of all is that I'm not worried. From the time I was a child, I tried to do only what's right. God blessed me with great life. When I won the trial in New York, peace came over me. I remember how I once argued with Geromico, whether the power comes from the gun. In my opinion, there exists no less power in distribution of information. Ferdinand and me are victims of false information. The Philippine government hired public relations advisers, so they could spread a distorted image about us. No one talks about the hospitals I have founded, schools. Everything is manipulated. What do they talk — shoes?

Q: With a hand on your heart, Imelda, is there a mistake in your life that you regret?

A: But we all make human mistakes. A person can control his life to a certain point. The rest is decided by God. Look, if all the things that have been said about Ferdinand and me were true — I wouldn't have received so much love in the Philippines. When I returned home, millions of people came to receive me. I then decided to run for the elections just to make a point. I received so many votes so much love...

Q: Looking back, was the decision to return to the Philippines a correct one?

A: Yes! Yes! At least, despite all the troubles, I'm back, close to my roots. A tree without roots — cannot exist long, flourish, thrive. I could not be a refugee all my life. If I had something to hide — I would have kept running. Do you know that Marcos and I never even took our salaries during our 20 years of governing?

Q: Well, but you had enough to eat....

A: Aren't you afraid of an attempt to kill you? After all you're a nuisance to certain people in your country?

A: I'm not afraid of death. I'm a believing woman. And I'm surrounded with so much love. It's better than bodygaurds and all that — the love, the faith.

Q: Do you have time for manicure-padicure, restaurants?

A: But of course! I've just returned from a badmington game. I spend time with friends, family. Don't picture a morbid woman. I'm happy with what I've got, and I keep my sense of humour."

Q: Do you have a dream?

A: I want to make a document, maybe a film, that will reflect different nations, different cultures, different people. To create a different understanding between everybody. This is my dream. The moment my assets will be released — and it will happen soon, I am sure of it! — That's what I would like to do."

Q: And fall in love again? Get married?

A: If you only knew how many men had offered me, fell in love with me, even while Ferdinand was alive.

Q: Well?

A: But I'm in love. I belong to somebody.

Q: To whom?

A: To Ferdinand

Imelda Marcos

## Cabinet urged to work in unison

(Continued from page 1)

Cabinet member and will reflect the government's policies and its stands, which will be naturally reflected on the man in the street," said the prime minister.

He urged the ministers to cooperate among themselves and interact with the media in the course of pursuing all issues related to their offices and the other official institutions, thus enabling the media to convey to the public the government's endeavours and services.

"Distinguished performance of any minister reflects positively on the government," said Mr. Kabariti, who urged the ministers to pursue the democratic method of dialogue within the council sessions. "We must work in harmony, solidarity and honour our commitments towards the country's leadership, the nation and the public," he said.

Mr. Kabariti said his choice of ministers followed a criteria which took into consideration the views of the public, adding that he did not fall under any pressures while selecting his colleagues.

"The parties that I consulted authorised me to have a free hand in selecting suitable persons with the right qualities, competence, purity and integrity and that is what I find in you," he told the Cabinet.

He also urged Cabinet members to consult each other so as to find the appropriate and objective solution to any problem.

"The Council of Ministers work should be institutional in that it must set up four committees and a services bureau chaired by the minister of interior and there will be an inner Cabinet also chaired by the interior minister," he said.

"Speaking out of experience, it will be natural for this Cabinet to be exposed to major pressures. But then no other government can or could escape criticism which is not cause for disgrace," he said.

Mr. Kabariti voiced appreciation for the outgoing government and to its efforts and achievements and the service it offered to the Jordanian citizens.

On his first day in office, the prime minister received representatives of private and public organisations who called to express congratulations and good wishes for the new government.

Also calling to offer good wishes were heads of religious denominations, presidents of associations, tribal leaders, mayors and prominent public figures including former prime ministers and Parliament members.

Good wishes for the new government were expressed in cables sent to Mr. Kabariti by the prime minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, the deputy premier and foreign minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jabar, and Qatar's ruler, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani.

## Good external ties a priority

(Continued from page 1)

performance and projecting the Kingdom's distinguished role in handling developments at the internal and pan-Arab levels in the peace era," Dr. Muasher said.

Answering a question about who would succeed him as ambassador to Israel, Dr. Muasher said he believed that a decision will be taken in the coming few weeks.

On the government's relation with the Islamic movement in the Kingdom, Dr. Muasher noted that the Islamist movement "is one of Jordan's active political groups," adding that the government would present its policy statement to the Lower House — which groups the Islamists — and "we will hear the Parliament's views then."

In reply to a question on federation or confederation with Palestine, he said that it is premature to discuss this subject.

"Any form of future cooperation with Palestine will be left until the Palestinians have finished their negotiations with Israel and after the final settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict has been reached," he said.

But he stressed that Jordanian-Palestinian relations "are now better and stronger than any time in the past."

"We are all in the same vehicle, the vehicle of peace," he said.

On relations with Iraq, Dr. Muasher said that the government's stand would be revealed in its policy statement to Parliament adding that the statement would also be clear on the Kingdom's relations with the rest of the world.

## Christopher and Peres

(Continued from page 1)

the agenda, but I don't think there will be any breakthroughs," said Yossi Beilin, minister in charge of the peace process.

Israeli press reports said Mr. Christopher could focus among other collateral issues on efforts to set up an international consortium to funnel aid to Syria in the event of a comprehensive peace agreement with Israel.

Such a body would be modelled on the donors' conference which has been assisting Palestinian autonomy.

Israeli officials said Mr. Christopher also would reassure Syria that Mr. Peres and his Labour Party could emerge strengthened from the upcoming elections and thus be in a better position to negotiate a withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Opinion polls show a healthy lead for Labour over the conservative Likud party, which is strongly opposed to any withdrawal from the Golan.

But in the runup to the vote, the Israeli leadership can not be expected to take any of the tough and potentially unpopular decisions needed concerning security and other arrangements to follow a Golan pullout, the officials said.

"There is no hope of moving towards peace in this kind of atmosphere," said Housing Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, who has been tipped to run the Labour campaign for the parliamentary elections.

"Who has their mind free to think about peace negotiations with Syria now that everyone is talking about the elections?" he asked.

## Peace heralds better future

(Continued from page 1)

are putting together the dreams and hopes for the future and all the many years have come down that separated us for so long and what we anticipated happened. The reality is that our hopes are the same, our objectives are the same. We are so happy to see that there are no more barriers that separate people from each other and deny them the chances that peace brings to them.

"Ours is a real peace, a warm peace. Ours is, I hope, an example and an inspiration to others.

"I am very happy that today our former first Ambassador to Israel (Marwan Muasher) is with us as the minister of information in the new Cabinet to welcome you again. He had just told me that he had met you a short while ago and had talked to you.

"As far as we are concerned here in Jordan, this is a very interesting moment. We are taking a look at ourselves, as to where we were, where we have been and to see what we can do to move ahead to make this country, hopefully, an example to others in terms of democracy, respect of pluralism, respect of human rights. We try to bring all the talents of our people together and try to give the challenge to the younger generations so that they are able to make their contribution towards building Jordan in the times ahead.

"We have also been through much over the years and we have grown together and reached the degree of that unity in this country that is most encouraging. So we have had the change of late which fills me with hope and confidence in terms of the future and that all that we have achieved so far will be consolidated further and that we will really see our people where we wish them to be and where we wish them to belong all the way towards contributing towards a better world in which we live.

"Our world has become indeed much smaller than it was in the past. We would like to thank you and welcome you. I would like to thank you for this wonderful gift and what it symbolises and stands for and to wish you a very happy visit to Petra tomorrow (and) to thank you for this opportunity to see you. Please keep in touch. Come and see us from time to time.

"If there is anything we can do at any time to clarify any area or point that you wish to address with us, feel free to do so. Yours is a very noble task and a very sacred and important one, to bring knowledge, to bring people closer together, to seek the truth, to inform.

"I hope that in the conclusion of your visit to both Israel and Jordan you will go back to different parts of the world much more assured that our future here is full of hope and that we are totally committed to the cause of peace and justice, the dignity of the human being and the cooperation of all the children of Abraham and their descendants in the context of peace. Thank you very very much indeed for the pleasure of being with you."

The head of the visiting delegation earlier delivered an address in which he thanked King Hussein for receiving the delegation and for the meeting, which, he said, enhances the Middle East peace process.

He noted that the Jewish Press Council seeks to boost understanding among peoples and works on serving the cause of peace and cooperation among the world's journalists.

## Reform -- Kabariti's mandate

(Continued from page 1)

The first trade between Jordan and Israel begins this month.

Although Jordan has undergone major economic restructuring since price riots in 1989, it needs to help the private sector by promoting exports, protecting investors and cutting red-tape.

Ibrahim Izzedine, a liberal former minister who tried to push reforms when heading the Civil Service Commission until 1989, said change was vital.

"You have to prepare to reposition in a region moving on economic and industrial competition," he said.

"That needs solid political and democratic institutions, a more liberal media and a new educational system to allow it to handle itself by the turn of this century."

## PLO executives start talks

(Continued from page 1)

"relationship between the government and the people," Mr. Daghme said.

When endorsed by the Palestinian cabinet and the legislative council elected last month, the basic law will be in force until the interim period of self-rule is due to end in May 1999, he said.

Hanan Ashrawi, a member of the legislative council, voiced optimism about the basic law.

"I think a lot of the groundwork has already been done. I think it is very promising. The draft I saw on the whole had a democratic approach," she said.

"It did not reflect the political and economic situation of the Palestinians and it gave a great deal of power to the executive," said Manuel Hassassian, a political scientist at Bethlehem University.

## Government committed to public freedoms

(Continued from page 1)

not be introduced, he said.

Instead, a new law based on recommendations of specialists, writers and the people themselves will be drafted after a national debate, the official said.

The new government will also enhance the freedom of the press and will moderate the executive authority's campaign to rein in the unruly weekly press, the official said.

Many of Jordan's new weeklies have been under close scrutiny, especially for publishing "obscene" photos and "fabricated" news. Tens of cases have been filed by the government against weekly newspapers.

"The weekly press is now part and parcel of the national press," said the official. "We'll be fooling ourselves if we denied that."

"This does not mean that everything will change overnight, but that a radical change is in the making," the official said. He referred to the trio of ministers, Kamal Nasser, Mustafa Shneikat and Abdul Karim Dughmi, as a sign that the government is committed to safeguarding public freedoms.

Mr. Nasser, minister of administrative development, heads the Union of Professional Associations and the Jordan Bar Association. Mr. Shneikat, minister of agriculture, is liberal, outspoken and one of only four leftists in the Lower House. Mr. Dughmi, a lawyer and now justice minister, used to chair the House's Judiciary Committee.

"It is a signal to the people that the government seriously intends to promote public freedoms," the official said.

The former government had been at loggerheads with the professional associations over the issue of normalisation of Jordan's relations with Israel. The government regarded the associations' threats to expel members if they had contacts with Israel or Israelis as unconstitutional and had issued veiled warnings that the associations could be disbanded if they continue to assume the mantle of political parties.

The official stressed the new government's intention to maintain good relations with the professional associations and said the appointment of Mr. Nasser was "sufficient proof" of the intention.

He also pointed to the appointment of Awad Khleifat, who is known for his clean record, as minister of interior.

"Mr. Khleifat is a honest deputy with a clean record. He should be able to address any violation of human rights in a wise manner."

The official explained that the inclusion of only one woman, Planning Minister Rima Khalaf, in the Cabinet was prompted by many considerations, "especially the need to ensure equal representation of parliamentary blocs in the new government."

## Kuwaiti MPs irk allies

(Continued from page 12)

A Gulf-based diplomat said it was possible that Bahrain would ban the entry of the deputies if it thought they planned to visit activists in their homes, an action that would risk inflaming the situation in the small island state.

"If we, members of a legislative authority in a sisterly state, are being treated like this for merely submitting a plea, how about the people there on the ground?" said Deputy Adnan Abdul Samad. "This illustrates the way the (Bahraini) authority deals with matters," he said.

Bahrain replaced its dissolved parliament with an appointed 30-member Shura council in 1993. Bahrain has blamed the unrest on foreign-inspired agents provocateurs and responded with wide-ranging arrests.

Saudi Arabia, like fellow Gulf states, imposes strict censorship on printe foreign publications before allowing them into the kingdom.

# Arab production fails to match growth

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states are unable to produce enough goods and services for their people and this has combined with higher world prices to keep pressure on their balance of payments, an official study said Monday.

Although many members of the Arab League are seeking to expand exports as part of overall reforms, their balances of payments are still suffering from deficits and the situation may get worse in the short term because of the emergence of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the study said.

From $151 billion in 1980, imports of goods and services [illegible] the 22-member Arab [illegible]gue surged to $172 billion [illegible] 1994, accounting for around 34 per cent of the total gross domestic product (GDP).

"The increase is because of the rise in prices in international markets and failure of the Arab production capacity to match the growth in the GDP and the population," the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) said.

"As a result, the contribution of Arab production sectors dropped to 52 per cent from 70 per cent of the GDP in 1980," said the annual report, prepared jointly by the AMF, the Kuwaiti-based Organisation for Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

Excerpts of the report, which covers economic and social developments in the Arab World for 1994, were published in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) newly-created economic weekly, Emirates Today.

The report showed Arab exports of goods and services plunged to around $168 billion in 1994 from $255 million in 1980.

As a result, the balance of goods and services recorded a deficit of around $4 billion in 1994 compared with a huge surplus of $99 billion in 1980, showed the report, which will be released in the first quarter.

Economists said exports were high in 1980 because oil prices rose nearly double their current level of around $17. Crude production was also higher in some member states, mainly Saudi Arabia, whose output peaked at 12 million barrels per day (b/d) compared with eight million b/d currently.

Several Arab states have been compelled to embark on reforms to tackle their economic problems, including the deficit in their balance of payments and budgets, debt, inflation and slow growth rates.

Most of them are giving priority to encouraging the private sector and attracting foreign capital in a bid to expand their production base. But the reforms have been slow due to lack of funds and hesitance by some members.

"It is time for Arab states to adopt policies that could activate the production sectors and increase their contribution to the economy in order to achieve a balance between supply and demand," the AMF report said.

"Such policies are needed to face the challenges to the Arab balances of payments. Such challenges include the fluctuations in the exchange rates of major world currencies and the decline in the U.S. dollar," the report added.

"The GATT agreement which gave birth to WTO will also have an adverse impact on the balance of payments in the short run as some Arab exports will lose preferential treatment and food imports will be more costly after producing countries ease or remove subsidies on food production," the AMF pointed out.

The study showed reforms led to a growth in development spending in the Arab World, with public and private investment rising to around $112 billion in 1994 from $107 billion in 1993.

Consumption, which covers public and private spending, increased by 3.1 per cent to $398 billion, including $147 billion in government consumption. "This shows the failure of efforts to rationalise government consumption in most member states," the report said.

# ILO focuses on 'dramatic plight' of exploited Asian women

GENEVA (AFP) — The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Monday highlighted the "dramatic plight" of some one and a half million Asian women temporarily working abroad in dire conditions, particularly in the Arab Gulf states.

Some 800,000 Asian women annually leave their country to work temporarily abroad, often with no welfare provision, and the number is "increasing steadily," the ILO said in a press release published with a report on the migrant workers on Monday.

The report urged the countries exporting women to campaign for better protection for workers in their host countries.

However it warned: "The danger of imposing bans and other legal restrictions is that they are very likely to increase illegal migration, which in fact makes women even more vulnerable."

Most of the migrants are from Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand, which is the world's largest exporter of nurses.

They find temporary work primarily in Gulf states, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. To a lesser degree they also take up employment in Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei.

Even if the workers are legal immigrants, the chances are they have no social security protection.

According to the ILO, both legal and illegal employment agencies extort "exorbitant fees" in lieu of future salaries or confiscate client's passports.

Work in the realm of "entertainment," offered to some employees "frequently a euphemism for prostitution," the ILO added.

Immigration of Asian women, who are led into prostitution notably in Japan, is highly organised by criminal gangs, the report said.

But cases of sexual harassment and exploitation of maids are more numerous, it said.

In some countries, such as Kuwait, foreign workers are not offered welfare protection.

In Singapore, immigrant women are forced to submit to a pregnancy test every six months, while in Hong Kong foreign maids cannot change employer for two years, the report said.

According to the labour office, the greatest increase in the number of Asian women employees abroad is the result of legal, rather than illegal, immigration.

Moreover the percentage of women among the Asian immigrants is rising steadily compared with the number of men.

According to ILO figures, the proportion rose from 15 per cent in the 1970s to 25 per cent in the 1980s and now frequently exceeds the number of immigrant men.

According to figures for legal migrants alone, 60 per cent of those leaving the Philippines are women, as are 84 per cent of those leaving Sri Lanka, while twice as many women leave Indonesia as men.

For Thailand, the proportion of women migrants is only 25 per cent officially, but the figure would soar astronomically if illegal migration were taken into consideration, the ILO said.

In some cases, the departure of the workers creates difficulties for the country of origin. Thailand, for example, as the world's greatest exporter of nursing care, suffers from a shortage of nurses.

# IEA: North Sea oil production to race ahead

LONDON (R) — North Sea oil output will race ahead again this year and keep rising until at least 1999, dashing the hopes of OPEC states for a rise in their crude quotas, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said

Production of North Sea crude and natural gas liquids (NGLs) is expected to jump 12 per cent this year to 6.707 million barrels per day (b/d) from 5.979 million in 1995, the Paris-based agency said in a report to member states.

It said technological advances, aided by a generous fiscal regime in Britain, had postponed the expected peak of North Sea output until at least 1999 when production is expected to reach 7.677 million b/d, up 28 per cent or 1.70 million b/d from 1995.

"The peak is substantially higher and later than recent conventional wisdom would have suggested, with consequent repercussions for the medium-term oil market," the report said.

It said that if the lessons of the North Sea are transferred to other areas of greater geological potential the results could be even more damaging for the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

"Any expected surge in the call on OPEC crude oil could be further delayed, until sometime well after the North Sea peaks, if the experience and technologies that contributed to the pushing out the North Sea peak accelerate their dissemination into other non-OPEC areas," it said.

OPEC has been waiting for more than two years to raise oil output quotas for its 12 members states under the 24.52 million b/d ceiling set in November 1994.

But fast-growing non-OPEC supplies, particularly from the North Sea, have more than matched rising world demand for oil and the pattern looks set to continue.

Looking forward into the next century, the IEA projected a gradual decline in North Sea oil but did not rule out the possibility that the start of reduced supplies might be delayed.

"In addition to a higher and later peak than once thought, the decline rate is expected to be fairly gentle," it said.

New fields west of Britain's northern Shetland Islands and smaller satellite developments in British waters alongside developments in Norway's Haltenbanken are expected to offset much of the fall from larger, older fields.

Enhanced recovery techniques have also raised estimates of recoverable reserves from mature fields and allowed production from what were previously deemed non-commercial supplies.

The report said the problems of decommissioning old rigs in the North Sea, highlighted by Shell's problems over disposing of its Brent Spar oil storage platform, should not prove too damaging to oil operators.

Shell eventually backed down last summer over plans to sink the platform in deep water following a public outcry led by environemental groups.

"Owners of facilities have for some time been making financial provision for these costs and thus there should be limited impact on the project economics," the IEA said.

Its report — "North Sea Oil Supply: The Expected Peak Recedes Again" — covers offshore production from Britain, Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands and Germany.

It said Norwegian crude output is expected to rise to 3.13 million b/d this year from 2.794 million in 1995. Norwegian NGLs will contribute another 160,000 b/d in 1996 compared with 138,000 b/d last year.

Norwegian output is expected to hit a peak of 3.731 million b/d in 1999 with another 156,000 b/d of NGLs.

British production is put at 2.961 million b/d this year, up from 2.848 million in 1995. An additional 336,000 b/d of NGLs are expected this year compared with 273,000 b/d in 1995.

Britain's output by 1999 is expected to rise less harply than Norway's to peak at 3.206 million b/d for crude, with an additional 350,000 b/d of NGLs, making a total of 3.556 million.

North Sea production from Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands is put at 254,000 b/d this year and 234,000 b/d in 1999 from 249,000 b/d last year.

# Chubais warns communist chief lying to West

DAVOS, Switzerland (AFP) — Anatoli Chubais, the architect of Russia's economic reforms, warned Monday that the head of the Communist Party was lying to the West in pledging not to reverse economic reforms.

Mr. Chubais, who resigned last month as deputy premier with special responsibility for economic policy, said Gennady Zyuganov would implement a large-scale renationalisation if he was elected in June presidential elections, for which he is the poll favourite.

He added that this would lead to "big blood in Russia" by private property owners and entrepreneurs refusing to give up their newly-acquired autonomy.

"This is the traditional, classical, typical, stupid communist lie," he told a press conference at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, a meeting of the world's business and political elite.

"There are two Zyuganovs," he said. "Zyuganov for the foreign use and Zyuganov for the domestic consumption."

The Russian communist leader has been in Davos over the weekend trying to convince business leaders they can trust him.

On Sunday he pledged that he would only consider renationalising enterprises if they were not being run efficiently, saying Western investors could have confidence in the new Russia.

"I know that if we start expropriating businesses there will be shooting from Murmansk to Vladivostok," he said. "Investors want above all to have stability, to be sure of the rules of the game, to have the right to do what they want with their profits."

# Iran's debt amounts to $30.6b

DUBAI (R) — Iran's principal debt and interest amounted to $30.6 billion by September of 1995, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said Monday.

"The total amount of Iran's foreign debts and their future interests at the end of the Iranian month of Shahrivar, Sept. 22, 1995, amounted to $30.6 billion," it said quoting a central bank publication.

The Islamic republic's total foreign debt stood at $23.4 billion it said, an implied reference to principal debt.

The agency put the country's short-term debt at $3.26 billion and medium and long-term debt at $20.14 billion by Sept. 22, 1995.

Central bank governor Mohsen Nourbakhsh said last month Iran's total financial obligations to foreign countries within its current five-year plan which ends in the year 2000 are $33 billion, of which $17 billion is rescheduled.

The Iranian parliament in January approved a $78 billion annual budget that is less dependent on oil revenue.

Meanwhile, Japan plans to continue its freeze on official loans to Iran "for the time being".

## THE BETTER HALF® By Glasbergen

"It's cheaper than a real baby and we get a new tape every month until he turns 21!"

## JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LEVED

PERPI

DORVOE

BLAMME

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: A

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: QUEUE EXULT VIRTUE MYSTIC
Answer: The land buyer thought the prime real estate was — QUITE A SITE

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Try to contact one at this time who has power over your affairs. Don't neglect your marketing early in the day or you could end up with nothing in the house.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) During your spare time today, endeavour to gather information you need. Make sure that your car is in good running order.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Get into business affairs which need attention or completion and plan how to add to present assets. Go along with your mate's plans.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Know what it is that an associate wants of a particular nature at this time and join forces in order to gain it for you to be successful.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have many duties to perform today so schedule your time and efforts and they are quickly behind and you can move on to other activities.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get some special talent perfected today so that you can make a fine impression on others later this evening and get the attention of those in authority.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get into the duties awaiting you at home today and make conditions there more as you want them to be for harmony to exist with loved ones.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get busy marketing, shopping and planning for later in the day more intelligently during the daytime and have great prosperity.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a good day to study your property and other possessions and know how to make them more valuable for the future.

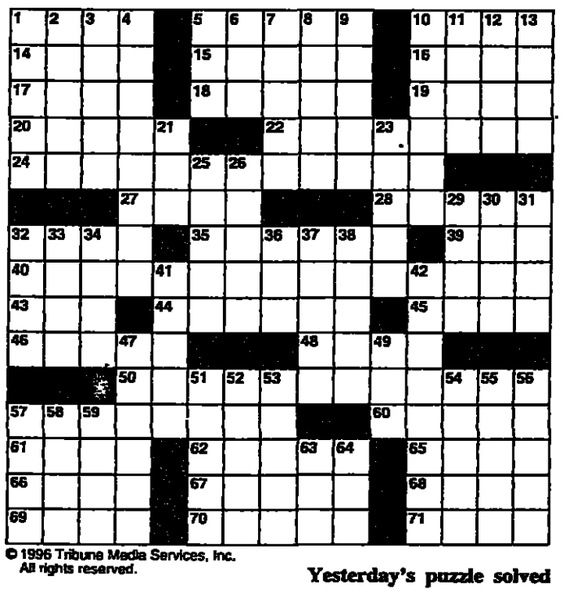
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You can do all that angling today for which you are well known and make real progress thereby. Forget the social later this evening.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is not a good day to be out in public today but fine for analysing your status in practical affairs and providing prosperity in your direction.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is a good day to go after personal and practical affairs with determination and forget all that daydreaming.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

## THE Daily Crossword by Melvin Kenworthy



ACROSS
1 Painter Chagall
5 Tenth
10 Excavates
14 First victim
15 Nile dam
16 Blue dye
17 — contendere
18 Tartan
19 Snow field
20 Hit, old style
22 Listed
24 Cagney-Raft film
27 Unemployed
28 Andean beast
32 — vera
35 King of the Fairies
39 Once around the track
40 Glenn Miller classic
43 D.D.E.
44 Flow
45 Pitcher
46 Nobel physicist
48 Remove
50 Taking place in the morning
57 Menial labor
60 Extreme
61 Small quantity
62 Pick up, as an option
65 Cup handles
66 Goblet part
67 La —, Milan
68 Blind part
69 Stockings
70 Basic values
71 Name in electronics

DOWN
1 Parsonage
2 Large snake
3 Memento
4 Haberdasher
5 Faucet
6 Map abbr.
7 Clemens
8 Aristide's land
9 Over
10 O.T. prophet
11 Don Juan's mother, a la Byron
12 Donate
13 Winter vehicle
21 Actor Byrnes
23 A.A. —
25 City in Belgium
26 Unit in physics
29 TV's "L. —"
30 Constructed
31 Mimic
32 Like
33 "Cool Hand —"
34 Lulu
36 Natives: suff.
37 British novelist
38 Abalone
41 "Of thee —"
42 Unnecessary
47 "— Butterfly"
49 NY school letters
51 Succinct
52 Build
53 Asian bird
54 General — Balbo
55 Scottish island
56 Snide
57 Plate
58 Newspaper section, for short
59 Indians
63 Rock group
64 Existed

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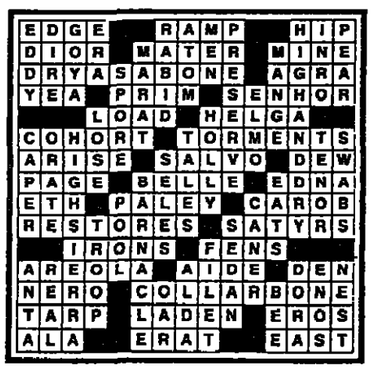
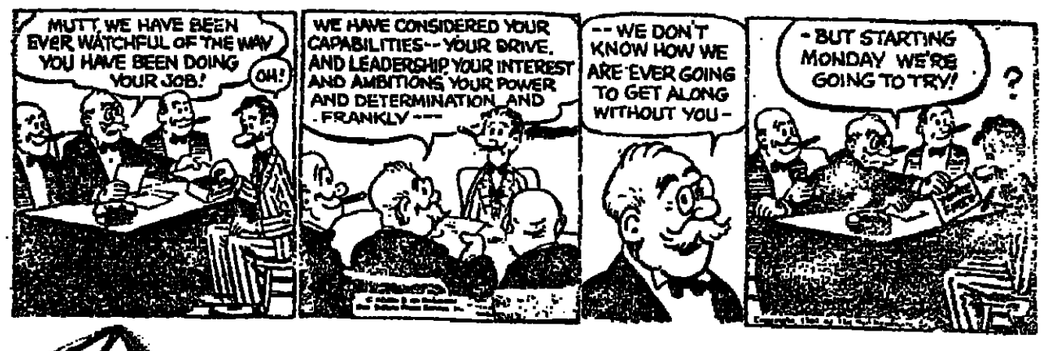
Yesterday's puzzle solved



## Peanuts

## Andy Capp

## Mutt'n'Jeff



# 15 institutions finance 13,683 small income- generating projects in Jordan

By Lola Kellani
*Special to the Jordan Times*

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan has 15 international, governmental and non-governmental organisations sponsoring around 13,683 income-generating projects for women, disabled, unemployed, underprivileged individuals and Palestinian refugees.

The conditions of financing these projects differ from one organisation to another, depending on the specialisation fo each institution, but the common policy between these organisations is the aim to improve the economic conditions of the people who fall under their umbrella

The amount of loans ranges between JD 75 and JD 10,000 depending on the category an individual falls under and on the organisation. For example, the Development and Generating Fund (DGF) gives up to JD 10,000 loans to unemployed individuals who support families and are qualified to carry the project. The DGF also gives loans through the Queen Alia Fund and the Agricultural Credit Corporation

The interest for most of these loans is around 10 per cent except for the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, and the National Aid Fund, whose loans are interest free.

Most of these projects require that the borrower provide a small capital. The contribution differ from one establishment to another, but at some times it reaches up to 50 per cent from the loan.

Each loan has expiry dates. For example, loans from the National Aid Fund, which financed 6,000 income-generating projects, should be repaid over 10 years, while the Agricultural Credit Corporation, which works with rural development projects, lends for 96 months. Save the Children Organisation loans mature in four months.

The General Union for Voluntary Societies (GUVS) has two programmes to help income generating projects. One of the programmes gives a JD 2,000 grant to underprivileged families, on condition that the family provides financial guarantee and contributes 30 per cent of the loan. The type of grants has financed 170 projects last year.

# Dubai to set up second free zone

DUBAI (AFP) — The Gulf emirate of Dubai, dubbed the Hong Kong of the Middle East, plans to set up its second free zone to attract investment and diversify its oil-reliant economy, officials have said.

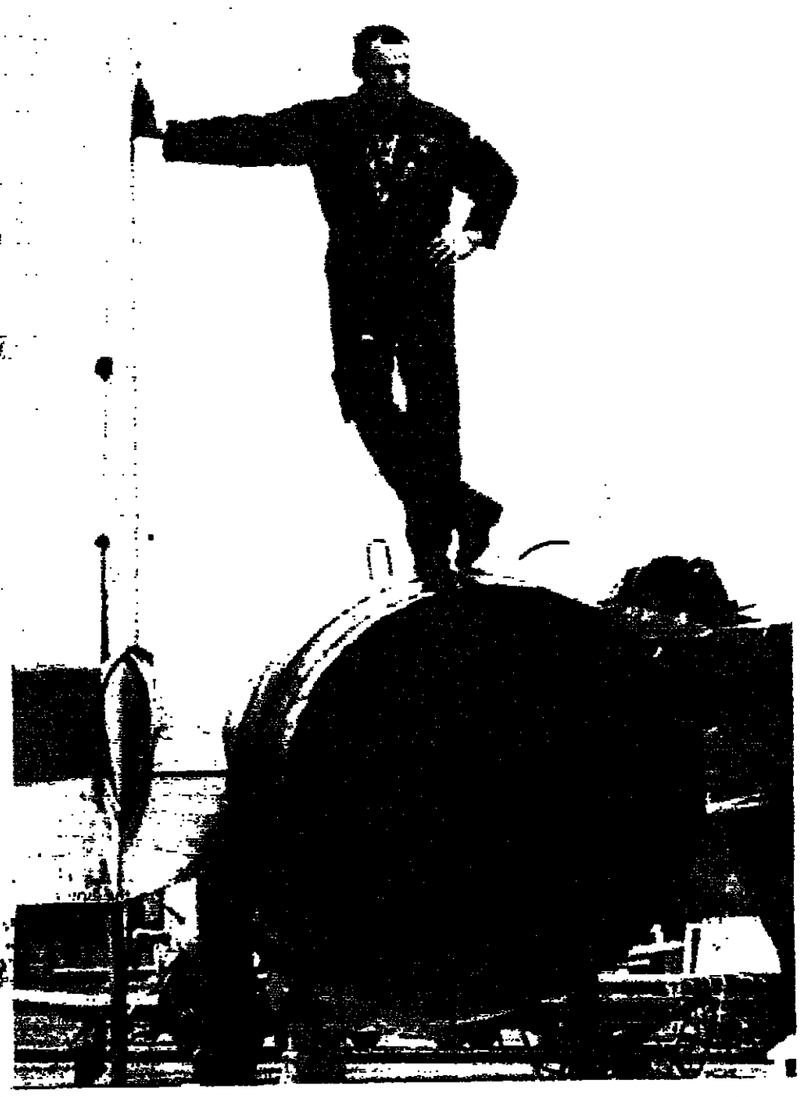
The zone will be established at the international airport and controlled by the Dubai Civil Aviation Department, under a decree issued by the emirate's ruler, Sheikh Maktum Ibn Rashid Al Maktum.

Companies operating in the zone will be exempted from income taxes and customs tariffs on their imports, according to the decree by Sheikh Maktum, also vice-president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Dubai, the second biggest and wealthiest member of the UAE, already has a large free zone at Jebel Ali where more than 800 local and foreign companies have invested more than $3 billion in industries and other fields.

The emirate has been involved in a drive to woo investors as it expects a surge in business after the British colony of Hong Kong reverts to China in 1997.

The barometre of economic activity in the Gulf, Dubai is the main transhipment centre in the region and handles nearly one fifth of the total non-oil trade of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council.



A Russian pilot leans against the tail of his Sukhoi SU-31 fighter as it is brought into the Asian Aerospace exhibition in Singapore Monday as final preparations are made for the show (Reuters photo)

# Asia seen as biggest aviation market by 2000

SINGAPORE (R) — Asia could be the world's biggest aviation market by the 21st century, U.S. jet builder Boeing and British aero-engine manufacturer Rolls-Royce forecast Monday

As manufacturers gathered in Singapore for the Asian aerospace air show, executives spoke bullishly of the Asian-pacific rim as the post-recession saviour of the industry.

World leader Boeing expects the civil aircraft market to be worth $1 trillion by 2014.

Asia could take the lion's share of that with 34 per cent followed by the U.S. with 33 per cent, senior planning and international development vice-president Lawrence Clarkson said.

South East Asia has led the recovery with Rolls-Royce landing its biggest ever contract last November. It is to supply the engines for 61 Boeing planes for Singapore Airlines.

Rolls-Royce's incoming chief executive John Rose forecast that half the world's airline traffic would be in the region by 2015.

He expects Asia to account for 30 per cent of Rolls-Royce's revenue by 2000, up a third from today's level.

Western manufacturers are also vying for the chance to join China and South Korea in developing 100-seater regional aircraft. "We are working hard and very aggressively to be chosen as the Western partner," Boeing's Clarkson said.

Organisers of the world's biggest airshow after Paris and Britain's Farnborough warned the Western aviation industry that ignoring Asia would be a dangerous mistake.

"Industry players who ignore Asia from now on do so only at their own risk," said Clive Richardson, sales director of the show that attracted more than 900 firms from 36 countries. It opens Tuesday.

Not all the news has buoyant, however.

Ailing Dutch plane maker Fokker, plunged into crisis when major shareholder Germany's Daimler-Benz A.G. withdrew its support, said it was talking to five "serious buyers" about the sale of the firm.

Spokesman Leo Steijn confirmed that South Korea's Samsung Aerospace Industries was on potential purchaser

Brazil's recently privatised aerospace firm Embraer is hoping that its new regional jet the EMB-145 turn around its fortunes.

It expects to cut its losses in 1996 and make a profit from 1997, Samuel Hill, president of its U.S. unit Embraer Aircraft Corp. told Reuters.

With Asia's economies growing at up to seven per cent a year, there has also been a surge in defence spending.

From Malaysia to the Philippines, this has given defence contractors a chance to compensate for shrinking sales in Europe, the United States and the Middle East in the post-cold war era.

## LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| One U.S. dollar | 1.3774/84 | Canadian dollar |
| | 1.4702/12 | Deutschemarks |
| | 1.6466/76 | Dutch guilders |
| | 1.2012/22 | Swiss francs |
| | 30.22/26 | Belgian francs |
| | 5.0545/95 | French francs |
| | 1569.2/0.7 | Italian lire |
| | 105.05/15 | Japanese yen |
| | 6.9470/70 | Swedish crowns |
| | 6.4240/90 | Norwegian crowns |
| | 5.6849/49 | Danish crowns |
| | 1.4135/45 | Singapore dollars |
| | 0.7553/58 | Australian dollars |
| | 7.7310/20 | Hong Kong dollars |
| One sterling | $1.5314/24 | |
| Gold (ounce) | $414.70/415.20 | |

# BUSINESS

## A review of news from the Arabic press

### Industrialists accuse government of not giving them adequate protection

☆☆ INDUSTRIALISTS' MAIN complaint is over what they see as the insufficient customs protection given to national industries to consolidate their presence in the local market. A survey among industrialists and traders also showed that both sectors are suffering from recession in the market as sales have dropped noticeably after the implementation of the sales tax.

Mahmoud Hijjawi, a board member of the Amman Chamber of Industry pointed out that the official promise to provide customs protection of at least 30 per cent to local industries was not fulfilled. He demanded that local industries, especially the clothing industry, be goven at least 30 per cent customs protection. Mr. Hijjawi explained that clothing industries pay 35 per cent customs on imported textile while customs on ready-made-clothes was 45 per cent, meaning that local industries benefit of 10 per cent and not 30 per cent as the government has promised. He pointed out that the implementation of the sales tax also benefitted traders who import ready-made-clothes which were subject to a 10 per cent additional tax. This tax, Mr. Hijjawi explained, was replaced by the sales tax and, accordingly, the cost remained constant and weakened the competitive strength of the local industry. Noting that imported clothes receive no less than 14 per cent of subsidy from exporters' countries, he proposed allowing imports of high quality European clothes and stopping imports of low-quality ready-made-clothes from East Asia so as the Jordanian industry could compete with high-quality and not low-quality goods. Mr. Hijjawi said more than 30,000 workers are employed in the clothing industry in Jordan.

Hussein Shukri, manager of a company for office furniture, said sales of locally-manufactured office furnitures were acceptable due to good quality and emphasis on technical specification. However, he added, there was a recession in the market.

Salah Khalifeh, manager of Al Karmel Tricot Plants, said tricot sales were good in the local market as a result of the development in the industry, especially after using machines programmed on computers. He indicated that prices were acceptable to the consumers compared to similar imported goods. Mr. Khalifeh demanded that the Ministry of Labour be flexible in dealing with the weaving industry as there are no skilled local workers in this sector, a situation which makes it imperative to that foreign labour be hired.

Mazen Shaath, a merchant who sells local industrial products, prefers not to be a member of the Amman Chamber of Commerce because it is supposed to help in protecting local industries. He indicates that customs on textiles imported from Britain and "Czechslovakia" are high and that negatively reflects on the local industry in favour of foreign-manufactured goods as good (Al Aswaq).

### Imports of used cars, buses made prior to 1990 will not be allowed

☆☆ USED CARS and buses manufactured prior to 1990 are not allowed to be imported in accordance with a 1978 Cabinet decision that forbids importing used cars and buses that have been manufactured five years or more from the date of clearing the vehicle of customs (Al Dustour).

### Saket to head Jordan Trade Association

☆☆ FORMER MINISTER and economist Bassam Al Saket was elected board chairman of the Jordan Trade Association replacing Ziyad Fariz, who was appointed governor of the Central Bank of Jordan. Dr. Saket is board chairman of the Jordan Cement Factories Company (Al Aswaq).

### Jordan Petroleum Company to boost production to 14,000 tonnes next year

☆☆ THE JORDAN Petroleum Refinery Company can meet Jordan's need until 2010 provided that it carries out a $500 million expansion project. The company's general manager indicated that the refinery's output capacity at present is 10,000 tonnes a day and that the output would be 14,000 tonnes next year under a $10 million plan to be implemented to improve the productivity of some units (Al Ra'i).

## Financial Markets

Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Eurocurrency Interest Rates — Date: 5/2/1996

| Currency | 1 MTH | 3 MTHS | 6 MTHS | 12 MTHS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| U.S. Dollar | 5.12 | 5.06 | 4.93 | 4.81 |
| Sterling Pound | 6.00 | 6.00 | 5.93 | 5.93 |
| Deutsche Mark | 3.12 | 3.06 | 3.00 | 2.94 |
| Swiss Franc | 1.50 | 1.50 | 1.50 | 1.68 |
| French Franc | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.25 | 0.31 | 0.32 | 0.43 |
| European Currency Unit | 4.63 | 4.56 | 4.50 | 4.50 |

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding 1 ½ Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin — Date: 5/2/1996

| Currency | Bid | Offer |
|---|---|---|
| U.S. Dollar | 0.7050 | 0.7100 |
| Sterling Pound | 1.0831 | 1.0885 |
| Deutsche Mark | 0.4792 | 0.4816 |
| Swiss Franc | 0.5838 | 0.5867 |
| French Franc | 0.1592 | 0.1599 |
| Japanese Yen* | 0.6679 | 0.6712 |
| Dutch Guilder | 0.4278 | 0.4299 |
| Swedish Krona | ****** | ****** |
| Italian Lira* | 0.0450 | 0.0452 |
| Belgian Franc | ****** | ****** |

* Per 100

Other Currencies — Date: 5/2/1996

| Currency | Bid | Offer |
|---|---|---|
| Bahraini Dinar | 1.8620 | 1.8760 |
| Lebanese Lira* | 0.04425 | 0.04465 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.1870 | 0.1888 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 2.3070 | 2.3670 |
| Qatari Riyal | 0.1930 | 0.1945 |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.2100 | 0.2200 |
| Omani Riyal | 1.8350 | 1.8410 |
| U.A.E. Dirham | 0.1922 | 0.1933 |
| Greek Drachma* | 0.2785 | 0.3045 |
| Cyprus Pound | 1.4865 | 1.5465 |

* Per 100

JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE

# Bulls finally lose

DENVER (R) — Just when it seemed Chicago would never lose another game the Bulls were tripped up by the Denver Nuggets on Sunday, ending their 18-game winning streak.

Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf scored 23 of his 32 points in the first half and the Nuggets recovered after blowing a 31-point lead to surprise the Bulls 105-99.

It was only the fourth loss suffered by Chicago in 45 games this season and the Bulls remain well ahead of the pace set by the 1971-72 Los Angeles Lakers, who went 69-13 for the best record in NBA history.

Dale Ellis and Antonio McDyess scored 16 points apiece for Denver, which won for just the third time in 10 games. Abdul-Rauf also handed out nine assists and Dikembe Mutombo had 17 boards, 10 points and five blocks for Denver.

Chicago trailed by 31 in the second and by 25 at the half, but Michael Jordan scored 22 of his 39 points in the third quarter as the Bulls closed to 84-82 entering the fourth.

Scottie Pippen opened the final quarter with a three-point play to give the Bulls their first lead since the first quarter at 85-84. The Bulls led again 92-91, before Denver put away the game with an 8-0 run.

Jordan scored Chicago's last seven points, but it wasn't enough to keep the string alive. Bill Wennington scored a season-high 18 points for the Bulls but Pippen was held to 13.

"I thought Michael did some unbelievable things in the third," Nuggets coach Bernie Bickerstaff said. "I was most proud of the way our guys didn't fold after they made that run."

At Los Angeles, Cedric Ceballos scored seven of his 18 points in a 14-4 run to open the fourth quarter as the Lakers beat the Utah Jazz 110-103 for their fifth win in six games.

Magic Johnson had 21 points, seven rebounds and six assists in his third game since his return, while Vlade Divac had 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Lakers, who led by four after three quarters but pulled away early in the fourth.

Karl Malone finished with 39 points and 12 rebounds and John Stockton had 18 points and 11 assists for Utah.

The game marked the first time Johnson faced Malone, who voiced opposition to Johnson's aborted 1992 return over fear of contracting the AIDS virus from the Lakers' superstar.

"I think he spoke out of not being educated. If that's fear, then that's fine," Johnson said. "He didn't know. I didn't know. Everybody didn't know.

"As a matter of fact, he probably helped everyone get educated and that's fine."

In Orlando, Shaquille O'Neal had 26 points and 12 rebounds and Horace Grant added 21 and 15 boards as the Magic improved to 24-0 at home with a 122-109 overtime victory over the San Antonio Spurs.

Nick Anderson led the Magic with 33 points, connecting on seven three pointers.

Dennis Scott's jumper gave the Magic a 96-86 lead with 4:54 left, but the Spurs went on a 17-7 run to tie the game at 103-103 and force overtime.

San Antonio centre David Robinson had 36 points and 11 rebounds and Avery Johnson chipped in 16 points and 14 assists for the Spurs. But they could muster only three jumpers by J.R. Reid in the extra session as Orlando outscored San Antonio 19-6 in overtime.

At Indiana, Derrick McKey scored 13 of his 21 points in the first half and Reggie Miller added 15 to lead the Pacers to their 17th consecutive home victory, a 90-83 win over the New York Knicks.

Patrick Ewing had 22 points and 13 rebounds to lead the Knicks, who saw their four-game winning streak halted.

McKey, who hit 10-of-13 shots from the field, scored 11 of his points in the first quarter to help Indiana build an early lead. He capped the quarter with a trey at the Buzzer.

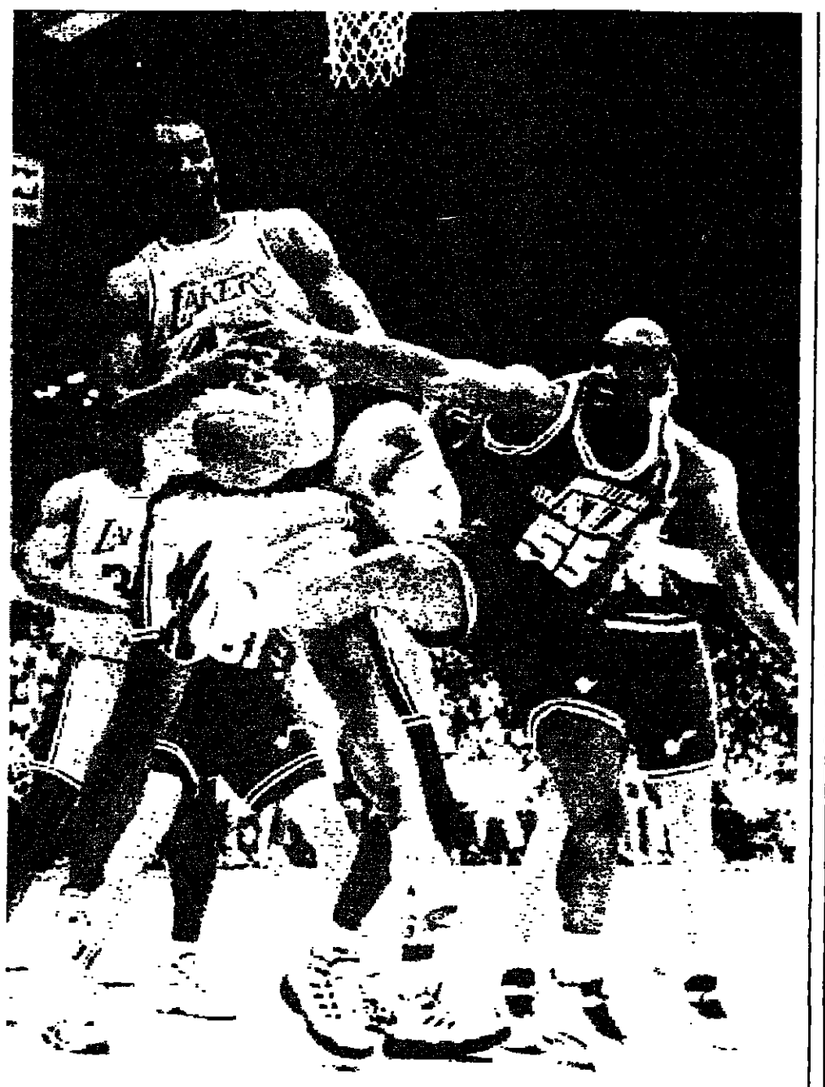
A 10-0 run in the third quarter helped the Pacers open a 58-40 lead and they never looked back.

At Washington, Charles Barkley scored 31 points and Kevin Johnson had nine of his 23 in overtime as the Phoenix Suns continued their dominance of the Bullets with a 123-115 win.

The Suns beat the Bullets for 16th consecutive time, a string that dates back to March 9, 1988.

Juwan Howard had 23 points and 14 rebounds for Washington, which had its three-game winning streak snapped.

Wayman Tisdale had 20 points, Johnson handed out 13 assists and Barkley pulled down 15 rebounds for the Suns, who outrebounded Washington 50-38.



Los Angeles Lakers' Elden Campbell (left) battles for the rebound with the Utah Jazz Antoine Carr (55) 4 in their NBA matchup in Inglewood (Reuters photo)

**RESULTS**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| INDIANA | 90 | New York | 83 |
| Orlando | 122 | San Antonio | 109 (OT) |
| Phoenix | 123 | Washington | 115 (OT) |
| Atlanta | 106 | Charlotte | 104 |
| Denver | 105 | Chicago | 99 |
| LA Lakers | 110 | Utah | 103 |
| Golden State | 96 | New Jersey | 92 |

## 1st Division Basketball

# Orthodoxi, Ahli score easy wins

By Aleen Bannayan
*Jordan Times Staff Reporter*

AMMAN — Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxi scored easy victories in their latest matches Sunday night as the top two rivals prepare to face-off in their season-ending match on Feb. 15.

Al Orthodoxi now lead the standings on score difference after scoring an overwhelming 111-61 win over last-placed Al Watani.

In another match in Irbid, titleholders Al Ahli scored a 68-45 win over hosts Al Jalil.

Al Jazireh who had the day off next face Al Ahli Thursday in a match anxiously awaited by fans of both teams. Al Jazireh had defeated Al Ahli 76-73 in their first round encounter and a win over Al Ahli will determine if they can advance their third place standing.

However, that seems remote at the moment after Al Jazireh had an easier opportunity against Al Orthodoxi. After trailing throughout most of their match, Al Orthodoxi got things under control and won the game technically ending Al Jazireh's chances of second place.

Only four matches remain in the competition which ends basketball's 1995 season as the JBF prepares to launch the 1996 competitions.

National teams have four tournaments abroad starting with the newly-formed Under-18 women's team participation in the 13th Asian Junior Women's Championship due to be held in Bangkok, Thailand April 21-28.

## Premier League roundup

# *Baqaa join 3 relegated teams*

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — While the 20th week of the Kingdom's Premier League soccer competition could not determine the season's champion, it did however decide the unlucky relegated teams of the 12-team competition.

In the week's two postponed matches played Sunday Al Hussein beat Al Baqaa 3-0 and Al Jazireh defeated Sahab 3-0.

Al Baqaa became the fourth relegated team alongside Sahab, Al Jalil and Russeifa. The four teams, promoted only last year, could not hold on to their places. Next season only two will be promoted making the number of competing teams only 10.

A record number of 31 goals were scored during the past week which witnessed surprising results and saw titleholders Al Wihdat take the lead for the first time after a 3-1 win over Kufrsoum.

Leaders Al Ramtha dropped to second place after their stunning 5-0 defeat to former champs Al Faisali.

Al Qadissieh scored the weeks biggest result moving up to fourth place after overwhelming 11th placed at Jalil 8-3.

Al Ahli, who were fearing relegation midway through the competition strengthened their position in the league after a 5-0 drubbing of last-placed Al Russeifa.

It was Al Russeifa's 20th consecutive loss, making them remain with no points in the overall standings while also having the worst scoring record at 15-82.

Al Jalil's Ibrahim Abdul Hadi remained the league's top scorer with a record 17 goals.

**STANDINGS after 20th week**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wihdat | 20 | 12 | 6 | 2 | 38 | 19 | 42 |
| Ramtha | 20 | 12 | 4 | 4 | 29 | 12 | 40 |
| Faisali | 20 | 11 | 6 | 3 | 37 | 12 | 39 |
| Qadissieh | 20 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 37 | 21 | 35 |
| Kufrsoum | 20 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 29 | 20 | 35 |
| Hussein | 20 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 35 | 17 | 31 |
| Ahli | 20 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 32 | 20 | 31 |
| Jazireh | 20 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 36 | 24 | 30 |
| ☆Baqaa | 20 | 6 | 3 | 11 | 28 | 45 | 21 |
| ☆Sahab | 20 | 2 | 9 | 9 | 18 | 33 | 15 |
| ☆Jalil | 20 | 2 | 3 | 15 | 27 | 62 | 9 |
| ☆Russeifa | 20 | — | — | 20 | 15 | 82 | — |

☆ Relegated to 1st division

# SPORTS IN BRIEF

## Donadoni to join U.S. league

MILAN (AP) — Roberto Donadoni, who played for three European champion clubs and the Italian team that was runner-up in the 1994 World Cup, is joining the new first division soccer league in the United States. The 32-year-old midfielder from AC Milan said Sunday he would trvel to New York and sign a two-year contract with the New York Metro Stars of U.S. Major League soccer. He follows U.S. national defender Alexi Lalas and journeyman Italian striker Giuseppe Galderisi — both going from Padova to the MLS Boston entry — as Italian first division players in the new league, scheduled for an April start. "It's not an easy choice, filled with some risks," Donadoni acknowledged in making the announcement after helping Milan beat as Roma 3-1 to increase its lead atop Serie A. Donadoni has played 12 seasons in Serie A, the last 10 with Milan, winning four league titles in addition to the three Champions Cups. He has made 59 appearances with the Italian national team, scoring five goals. He was an integral member of Italy's 1990 World Cup semifinalists and the team that lost to Brazil in final of the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

## Perathoner wins Super-G in Garmisch

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany (R) — Italy's Werner Perathoner won a men's Alpine Skiing World Cup Super-Giant slalom on Monday when he clocked one mintue 19.62 seconds, according to provisional results. Luc Alphand of France finished second in 1:19.83 and Austria's Patrick Wirth was third in 1:20.05.

## Netherlands, India in Davis Cup tie

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Dutch Davis Cup captain Stan Franker on Monday predicted a 5-0 whitewash of India in their world group first round tie in Jaipur this weekend. "We are aware of India's good record against strong countries in the Davis Cup, but we hope for a 5-0 result" Franker said, soon after the team's arrival for the February 9-11 tie at the Jai Club grass courts. "We have not played on grass for some time, but the world class players in our ranks should not find it difficult," the visiting coach said. World number 11 Richard Krajicek leads the Dutch challenge, supported by Jan Siemerink and the crack doubles combination of Paul Hearius and Jacco Eltingh, all ranked below 30. India's hopes rest again on Leander Paes, who upset Croatian Goran Ivanisevic during the world group play-off clash here in September. India won the tie 3-2.

## McColgan selected for Olympic marathon

LONDON (R) — Liz McColgan, the 1991 world 10,000 metres champion, has been selected to run the marathon for Britain at the Atlanta Olympic Games. McColgan, 31, switched to the marathon after winning her 10,000 title in Tokyo, winning the 1991 New York marathon and finishing first in the Tokyo marathon in the following year. She has been troubled by leg injuries over the past few seasons and finished seventh in her comeback marathon in Tokyo last November. Peter Whitehead, who finished fourth in last year's world championship marthon in Gothenburg, and 1993 World Cup champion Richward Nerurkar were also named in the British team on Monday.

## Brolin set to opt out

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Swedish World Cup star Tomas Brolin is set to take up his option to leave Leeds United in the summer after just six months at the English Premier club. "They manager and I don't have the same idea about my best position. That's why I have asked to be left out of the starting line-up," he told Dagens Nyheter newspaper on Monday. Leeds boss Howard Wilkinson paid Italian side Parma a club record fee of 4.5 million pounds in November for the 25-year-old Brolin who was seen as a top-class partner for Ghanaian striker TonyYeboah. Wilkinson said at the time the club had come to a legal agreement that Brolin had until the summer to make up his mind about playing. Brolin sparkled for Sweden when they finished third in the World Cup finals in the USA in 1994 and scored 20 goals in four seasons with Parma before breaking his ankle last year. But since his recovery he had failed to command a regular place in the Parma line-up. Brolin helped Parma win the Italian Cup in 1992, European Cup Winners' Cup in 1993 and UEFA Cup in 1995.

Chris Perry (top) and Kenny Cunningham (right) of Wimbledon smother the challenge of Manchester United's David Beckham during their Premier League match at Selhurst Park. The final score was a 4-2 win for Manchester United (Reuters photo)

# Peacock leads Chelsea revival

LONDON (AFP) — Gavin Peacock scored the first Chelsea hat-trick for nearly six years as Glenn Hoddle's side underlined their emergence as a leading force in English football in a 5-0 demolition of Middlesbrough on Sunday.

John Spencer and Paul Furlong were also on target as Boro, without inspirational Brazilian star Juninho, suffered their sixth consecutive league defeat and the heaviest loss of their first season back in the top flight.

Jubilant Chelsea fans rubbed it in by chanting "Bryan Robson for England" in reference to the speculation that the Middlesbrough manager has been lined up as the international successor to Terry Venables.

Chelsea have been gathering an impressive momentum this season and after Sunday's performance, Blues fans will worry it will be Hoddle and not Robson who will be pushed firmly into the frame for the vacancy.

Hoddle, who has still to agree a new Chelsea contract to replace the one that expires in June, saw the culimination of this persistence with a bold, freewheeling brand of attacking football pay off in a goal burst of stylish content which ran luckless Boro ragged.

Chelsea have now lost only one of their last 15 games, climbing to eighth place in the Premiership and their exhilarating football was decorated by the sublime touches of Dutch star Ruud Gullit.

Romanian full back Dan Petrescu and defender David Lee — a sweeper playing as well as any in the country — also stood out in a cohesive team performance.

Peacock's clinical finishing helped him grab the first Chelsea treble since Kerry Dixon hit a hat-trick against Millwall at the end of the 1989-90 season.

Only in the side because of suspensions to skipper Denis Wise and striker Mark Hughes, Peacock was just inches away from giving Chelsea the lead as early as the eighth minute.

He came flying in at the far post in pursuit of Paul Furlong's header and failed by inches to make the connection.

But Peacock scored twice in a devastating nine minute spell around the half hour to settle the contest.

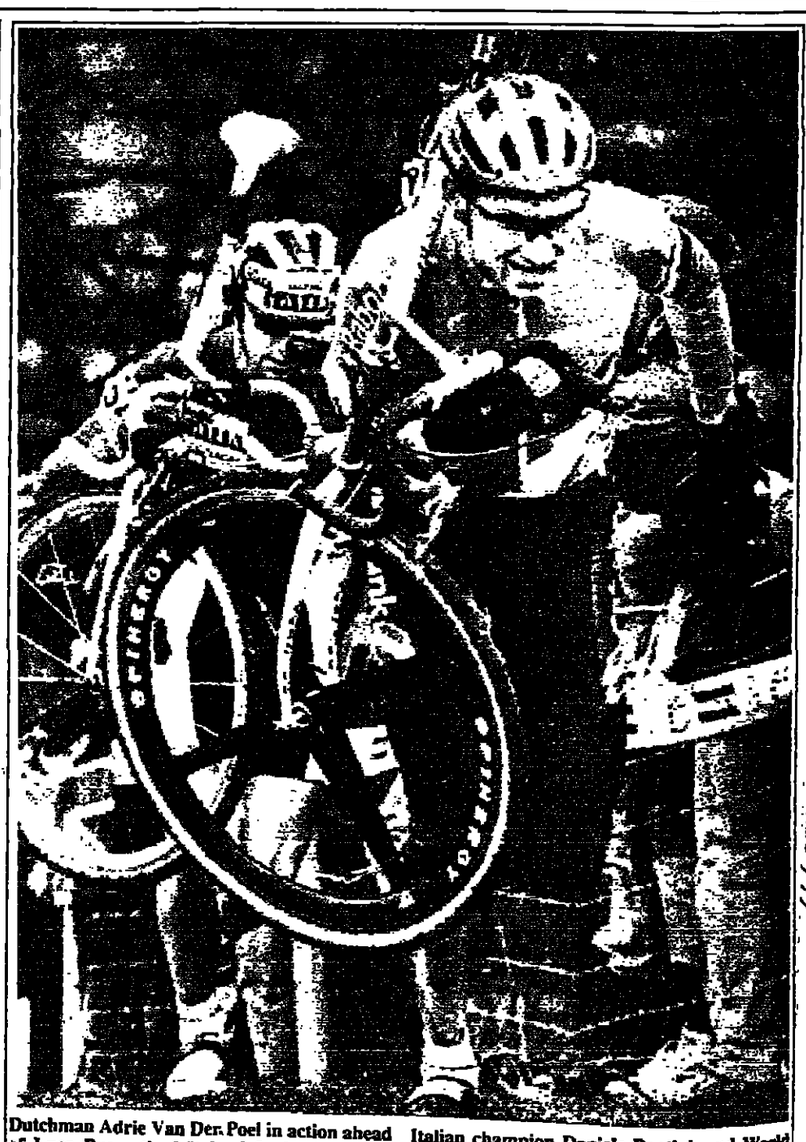
His half volley from the edge of the box bounced through a crowd of players to defeat goalkeeper Gary Walsh, unsighted by Gullit's presence.

Two minutes later Petrescu and Lee combined to set up the second for Scottish international Spencer after Boro's Craig Hignett gave the ball away in midfield.

Peacock made it 3-0 with his second goal on 38 minutes after Gullit had burst through onto Spencer's well weighted pass and unselfishly set up his teammate for a close range tap-in when he could easily have scored himself.

Gullit produced one of the passes of the season to set up the fourth goal seven minutes after the break.

He put the ball right on Petrescu's toe with a 60-yard cross field pass and the Romanian dragged two Middlesbrough defenders out of position as he cut in to open the way for Furlong who rounded Walsh to score.



Dutchman Adrie Van Der Poel in action ahead of Luca Bramati of Italy (left) in the world cyclocross championship at Montreuil outside Paris. Van der Poel won the title ahead of Italian champion Daniele Pontinii and World Cup winner Luca Bramati who was third after the crosscountry 27-km race (Reuters photo)

Milan's Liberian striker George Weah (left) goes after the ball as Roma's Marco Lanna challenges during their Italian first division match (Reuters photo)

# Milan, Atletico extend leads

PARIS (AFP) — AC Milan and Atletico Madrid extended their respective leads in the Italian and Spanish championships this weekend while in France there were exits for several first division clubs in the Cup competition.

Liberian striker George Weah scored his first goal, since returning the African Nations Cup, to help AC Milan extend their lead to five points over rivals Fiorentina and Parma.

Milan disposed of Roma 3-1, while Fiorentina were held to a goalless draw by Cagliari and Parma benefitted from Sampdoria defender Alessandro Lammonica's own goal to win 1-0.

Weah, who had a disappointing African Nations Cup, opened the scoring in the sixth minute. Roma, without their two international strikers Abel Balbo and Daniel Fonseca through illness and injury, struck back immediately through midfielder Francesco Moriero.

Milan's Montenigrin striker Dejan Savicevic scored in the 55th minute and young defender Christian Panucci assured Milan of victory in the 85 minute.

Former world footballer of the year Roberto Baggio sounded the only sour note for the Milan team. Substituted in the second half by coach Fabio Capello he ran straight to the dressing room.

Fiorentina's 0-0 draw away at Cagliari was their second successive draw and allowed Parma to draw level on points.

Gabriel Batistuta, Fiorentina's top scorer, had a bad day all round. His main rival for top league marksman, Bari's Igor Protti, scored twice in their 4-3 loss to Lazio for whom Giuseppe Signori scored a hattrick — Lazio's second in two matches.

Protti raised his total to 16 for the season, two ahead of Batistuta.

Atletico Madrid's lead at the top of the Spanish First Division increased to 11 points as the two Barcelona clubs could only draw while Atletico won 2-1 at Sporting Gijon on Saturday.

## European Soccer

Atletico's Yugoslavian midfielder Milinko Pantic had the leaders on their way after 25 minutes and Spanish international midfielder Jose Luis Caminero wrapped up the three points on 68. The home fans had to sweat out the final quarter of an hour after Igor Lediakhov scored from the spot on 72 minutes.

Barcelona had to come from behind to draw 1-1 away to Rayo Vallecano, the team whose defeat of Real Madrid a fortnight ago ended Jorge Valdano's reign at the champions.

Vallecano took the lead on the half hour courtesy of their 30 year old Argentinian defended Aquino. Barcelona, whose recent run of bad results has prompted speculation about coach Johan Cruyff's future, equalised in the 77th minute through teenage midfielder Ivan De La Pena.

Espanyol, meanwhile, were held to a scoreless draw at home to Real Socieded.

Real Madrid continued their revival with a 4-0 thrashing of Betis, teenage sensation Rual scoring his fourth goal in three matches.

Seven top-flight clubs crashed out of the French Cup on Saturday, six of them victims to shock second round giant-killings.

Metz, third in the league, headed the list of major names making an early exit, losing at home to second division leaders Caen 1-0.

French champions Nantes also failed to reach the last 16 but they had the excuse of losing to equally-ranked rivals Monaco in a penalty shoot-out.

Meanwhile Paris Saint Germain, the cup holders, saw off Second Division Angers 2-0 at home but at a price, international midfielder Vincent Guerin breaking his left collar bone. He is expected to be out for six weeks.

The other first division clubs to go out were Cannes, defeated 1-0 at home by Sochaux, and Nice, ousted by visiting Laval by the same margin.

But the real shocks were handed out to Saint Etienne, Bordeaux, who sacked their Yugoslavian coach Slavo Muslin, and Martigues, who all lost away to third division sides.

# Rice leads NFC to Pro Bowl win

HONOLULU, Hawaii (R) — San Francisco 49ers superstar receiver Jerry Rice caught six passese for 82 yards and a touchdown and the National Football Conference (NFC) made a defensive stand in the final seconds to hold on for a 20-13 victory over the American Football Conference (AFC) in the pro bowl on Sunday.

The NFC allowed a 93-yard scoring toss from first-time pro bowler Jeff Blake of the Cincinnati Bengals to Pittsburgh Steelers receiver Yancey Thigpen on their third play, but just one score thereafter.

The NFC defence was tested in the final minute and rose to the occasion. The AFC stars took over at midfield after a punt and Indianapolis Colts quarterback Jim Harbaugh found New England Patriots tight end Ben Coates with a 36-yard pass deep into NFC territory.

But Harbaugh was unable to complete the potential game-winning drive. Under pressure on three successive plays, Harbaugh threw three incompletions, ending the AFC threat.

Rice was named Most Valuable Player as the NFC improved to 15-11 in the NFL's All-Star game, which began in 1971.

The AFC trailed 20-7 at halftime but Harbaugh directed a 13-play, 87-yard drive that lasted more than eight minutes.

Twice on third down, he scrambled for first downs. He also connected with Cincinnati's Carl Pickens for 14 yards on third-and-13 to keep the drive alive.

## GOREN BRIDGE

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COUNTED OUT

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ Void
♡ A J 10 8 4 3
◇ A K J 8 5 2
♣ 7

WEST
♠ 8 5 4 2
♡ 7 2
◇ Q
♣ K Q J 9 6 3

EAST
♠ J 7
♡ K 6 5
◇ 10 7 6 4
♣ A 5 4 2

SOUTH
♠ A K Q 10 9 6 3
♡ Q 9
◇ 9 3
♣ 10 8

The bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4♠ | Pass | Pass | Pass |

Opening lead: King of ♣

A happy, peaceful and healthy New Year to our readers everywhere.

Experienced partnerships have developed their carding signals to a fine art. Just how much can be read into the order in which partner chooses to play a card can speak volumes at the highest level. This example is from a high-stake rubber bridge game.

South's opening bid of four spades follows the Rule of Two and Three. Not vulnerable, the hand should be able to take within three tricks of the bid, and South's spade suit rated to produce seven tricks on its own.

West led the king of clubs, on which East signalled with the five. Since that card is encouraging and not count, the first problem West faced was whether declarer held two or three cards in the suit. There was a way to establish that — West continued with the jack of clubs, to allow partner to give count.

With three clubs headed by the ace, East should overtake and return a club. With four, East should simply play the lowest club to give count.

When East followed with the two of clubs on the second round, West realized that there was only one hope — declarer's distribution had to be specifically 7-2-2-2, and East had to hold the king of hearts. At trick three West shifted to the queen of diamonds!

That locked declarer in dummy, leaving South with a choice of losing options. If declarer tried to cash another diamond, West would ruff and return a heart, and there would be no way South could avoid losing another trick. If South tried a heart from the table, East could shoot up with the king of hearts and give partner a diamond ruff.

# 'Asprilla sale to Newcastle blocked'

PARMA (R) — The planned $10.1 million transfer of Colombian World Cup star Faustino Asprilla to English League leaders Newcastle United has been blocked by a row over his fitness, his Italian club Parma said on Sunday.

Chairman Giorgio Pedraneschi said Parma could not accept demands from Newcastle for a hefty cut in the transfer fee as a result of what the English side said were knee problems.

Pedraneschi, speaking to reporters after Parma beat Sampdoria 1-0 to move second in Serie A, said the deal had been halted on Sunday morning when Parma and Newcastle executives met in Milan.

"Newcastle continue to maintain that there are problems with Asprilla's knee and so they want a big cut in the price, he said. "We have medical reports which tell us the opposite and as a result it was not possible to reach any sort of agreement."

# Linford Christie injured at weekend

LONDON (R) — Olympic champion Linford Christie will not compete in any more indoor meetings this winter after being injured at the weekend.

He damaged an adductor muscle in his left leg in the 60 metres final at the British Indoor Championships.

This means he misses a scheduled race on Saturday against world indoor champion Bruny Surin of Canada. He is also out of Britain's match against France in Glasgow on February 24.

"Linford will not be doing any more indoor meetings," a spokeswoman for the Olympic gold medallist said on Monday.

"We will be having treatment to get the injury fixed and then return to training."

Christie is still not saying whether he will defend his 100 metres title at the Atlanta Olympics this summer.

# Russia's Pankratov set to rewrite world swimming records

PARIS (R) — Rival Franck Esposito calls him an extra-terrestrial but Russian Denis Pankratov's astonishing underwater swimming style makes him more a creature from the deep.

The 22-year-old from Volgograd gave a brilliant performance at the weekend's Paris World Cup meeting, breaking the world short-course records in the 100 and 200 metres butterfly and getting within a whisker of a third world record in the 50.

He has honed his underwater technique to perfection, swimming the first length of the 25-metre pool before breaking the surface and revolutionising the approach to the event.

Pankratov, double European long-course champion last year in Vienna where he broke the 100 metres butterfly world record in the 50-metre pool, is hot favourite for this year's Atlanta Olympics.

Olympic spectators could find themselves watching an apparently empty lane because Pankratov, the submarine without a periscope, said he had achieved 75 metres underwater in winter training in a 50-metre pool at breast in western France.

Russian swimmer Denis Pankratov waves to the crowd after setting a new world short course record in the men's 100m butterfly event during the World Cup meeting in Paris (Reuters photo)

"I've been training especially for that this winter because the longer you stay under water, the more you avoid leg movements that slow your speed," he said.

Esposito could not get within five seconds of Pankratov in the 200 metres Paris race as the Russian eclipsed the Frenchman's world record. Esposito said he thought Pankratov could break world records any time he wanted.

Pankratov expressed it slightly differently. "I'm not stopping here. I'm sure I can go even faster," he said.

His records in Paris came in his first meeting of the year and promised much for the season. "This gives me confidence for the Atlanta Olympics," he said.

Pankratov's ease in Paris was breathtaking. He took almost three-quarters of a second off Esposito's two-year-old world record in the 200 metres with a time of one minute 52.34 seconds.

In the 100 metres, he became the first swimmer to beat the 52-second barrier, winning in 51.94 seconds to break Canadian Marcel Gery's a six-year-old mark by more than a tenth of a second.

In doing so, the submarine supplanted the Albatross in the European record books as Pankratov beat the great German Michael Gross's European record by more than half a second.

Unless world swimming authorities decide to make his underwater style illegal, Pankratov will surely alter the way butterfly is swum in future as well as rewrite all the record books this year.

The new drivers of Benetton Formula One, Austrian Gerard Berger (left) and his teammate France's Jean Alesi, pose in front of the Benetton F1 car at the old Greece threatre in Taormina (Reuters photo)

# Gebreselassie smashes 3,000m record

STUTTGART (R) — Ethiopia's Haile Gebreselassie set his second world indoor record in eight days on Sunday, clocking a time of seven minutes 30.72 seconds over 3,000 metres at a meeting in Stuttgart.

Gebreselassie's stunning run came the weekend after he had smashed the men's world 5,000 metres indoor record in Sindelfingen, also in Germany.

His new 3,000 metres time slashed almost five seconds off the previous record of 7:35.15 by Moses Kiptanui of Kenya, set in February 1995.

Gebreselassie timed his race to perfection, powering away from a field which included Olympic 3,000 metres champion Dieter Baumann of Germany. "At the end of the race, it was just fantastic," the Ethiopian athlete said afterwards..

Fermin Cacho finished second in a time of 7:36.61 and fellow Spaniard Enriuq Molina was third. Baumann was a distant fourth in 7:43.60.

# Agassi beats Sampras in exhibition

ATLANTA (AP) — Andre Agassi, who is about to lose the No. 1 ranking to Thomas Muster, consoled himself by beating Pete Sampras in an exhibition 6-4, 2-6, 6-4.

The tide of the match, held in conjunction with the opening of a sporting goods trade show in Atlanta, turned in the sixth and seventh games of the deciding set.

Leading 3-2, Sampras was poised to break Agassi when he won the first two points of the sixth game. But after Sampras hit a return long, Agassi reeled off three straight aces to even the set.

The next game provided the best tennis of the night. Agassi made a great return of Sampras' serve and then scurried into the corner to hit a forehand winner, promoting a bow to the crowd of about 11,000 which turned out on a snowy, bitterly cold evening. He then completed the break with a whistling backhand winner down the opposite line to go up 3-3.

Sampras had three break points in the next game but Agassi fended off each one. He then gained an advantage with one of his eight third-set aces and, working quickly, closed out the game with a service winner.

Agassi held on his next serve, closing out the match when Sampras weekly plucked his last shot into the net.

"It doesnt lend itself to a lot of great shots, but I think the people saw some good tennis," Agassi said of the exhibition format.

Sampras, one of the world's biggest servers, was beaten by Agassi in that department. Agassi served up 19 aces to 12 for Sampras in a match that mostly featured two big hitters wailing away at each other from the baseline.

Agassi, who lost to Michael Chang in the semi-finals of the Australian Open, will give up the No. 1 ranking when the next ATP rankings are released Feb. 12. A scheduling quirk cost Agassi 204 points and pushed Muster, of Austria, to the top spot.

Sampras, who will move past Agassi into the No. 2 position, lost the No. 1 ranking when he was upset by 19-year-old Mark Philippoussis in the third round of the Australian.

Both Sampras and Agassi are expected to return to Atlanta this summer to play for the U.S. team in the Olympic Games..

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Shows: 12:30, 2:15, 6:45, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA CONCORD TEL: 677420
CONCORD "1"
* Police Academy
Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
* Jim Carrie
Shows: 2:30, 6:15

AMMOUN THEATRE & CINEMA/TEL: 618274 - 618275
Alaa Zalzali....in The Golden Bird Operation (Arabic)
Shows: 12:30, 3, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155
"Ahlan Tatbie" play Welcome Normalisation
Shows: 8:30 p.m.
For reservation call 625155

AIR CRASH: Dozens of people gather on Monday to look at the wreckage after a cargo plane crashed into homes near Asuncion, Paraguay, killing at least 21 people, most of them children playing an outdoor volleyball match. The plane, a DC-8 aircraft of Colombia's Lineas Aereas del Caribe, crashed shortly after takeoff (see page five) (Reuter photo)

# Likud, Tsomet work out key deal ahead of election

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu, with early elections looming, has taken a big step in his uphill battle to be prime minister by striking a pact that will take a main rival out of the race.

Newspaper, television and radio reports said Monday that Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing Likud Party and the smaller Tsomet Party had reached a preliminary agreement to present a joint slate of candidates in the upcoming elections.

Under the pact, due to be signed by the two movements later this week, Tsomet leader Rafael Eitan agreed not to run for the prime minister's job in exchange for the number-two spot on the Likud ticket.

The reports say Mr. Eitan, a former army chief of staff, also got a promise of the defence portfolio if the right wins the polls.

Tsomet, which won eight seats in parliament in the last elections in 1992, would also get seven more of the top 40 slots on the Likud election list.

Likud won 32 seats in the previous elections although defections have since cut its ranks.

News of the Likud-Tsomet pact came ahead of a widely expected announcement by Prime Minister Shimon Peres moving the polls up from their scheduled date of Oct. 29 to late May or early June.

Mr. Peres is expected to announce the move next week.

Mr. Peres is boosted by a sympathy vote following the November assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

"If Raful (Eitan) had run for prime minister, it truly could have weakened Netanyahu's chances of defeating Peres," said Likud legislator Limor Livnat.

Israelis will cast two ballots — one for prime minister and the other for a list of party candidates for the 120-member parliament.

A three-way race for prime minister could have denied Mr. Peres, 72, or Mr. Netanyahu, 46, the simple majority needed to be declared the winner and forced a run-off.

Announcing the deal to cheering high-school students on Monday, Mr. Netanyahu said: "I spoke to him (Eitan) a few minutes ago. He said we would go for it. Likud and Tsomet will stand in a joint list, the first expression of a uniting of forces."

The Likud-Tsomet deal had been the dream of Jewish settlers in the West Bank, whose leaders had urged both parties to forge a united right-wing front and warned that Mr. Eitan's candidacy for the premiership would draw votes away from Mr. Netanyahu.

"Likud and Tsomet are very concerned about the increasing erosion, the way the country is going down the drain," Mr. Netanyahu told reporters.

"By joining forces, we want to stabilise the situation and lead the country towards peace with security — peace which retains our most precious assets: Jerusalem, the heart of the country, and the Golan Heights," he said.

Political analyst Hanan Crystal said Mr. Eitan, whose military credentials command respect from many Israelis, would bolster Mr. Netanyahu's chances against Mr. Peres.

"Peres against Netanyahu is the adult versus the child, the experienced versus the inexperienced. Now (Peres) must think he is running against two. Eitan has public trust," Ms. Crystal said on Israel Radio.

Likud sources said Mr. Netanyahu was likely to present Mr. Eitan to the electorate as a future defence minister, putting Mr. Peres — who currently holds the defence portfolio but has no military background — on the defensive in security-concious Israel.

"Peres will have to have beside him his own (former) army chief of staff — (Foreign Minister) Ehud Barak," Ms. Crystal said.

Likud now holds 72 seats in parliament, and Tsomet, five.

Labour has 44 seats and is allied with 12 members of the left-wing Meretz party and two Tsomet defectors. The support of five legislators from mainly Arab parties helps to keep the Labour government in power.

The latest survey published Friday gave Mr. Peres 46 per cent of the vote in the prime minister's race to 30 per cent for Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Peres told Israeli radio on Monday that he was "not worried" by the Likud-Tsomet alliance.

# Yilmaz seeks defectors from rival Ciller's party

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkish Prime Minister-designate Mesut Yilmaz on Monday urged several deputies of the True Path Party, headed by his arch-rival Tansu Ciller, to support a government that he is aiming to form.

"I ask those (True Path) deputies to evaluate the obstacles to an alliance between True Path and (my) Motherland Party," Mr. Yilmaz told reporters here. "I believe those deputies, considering their responsibilities, will review their position and support us."

Mr. Yilmaz was mandated Saturday to form a new government after pro-Islamic leader Necmettin Erbakan and caretaker Prime Minister Ciller each failed to set up a cabinet that would receive a parliamentary vote of confidence.

Turkey's Dec. 24 elections resulted in a split parliament, with 158 seats won by the pro-Islamic Welfare Party in the 550-seat assembly, well short of an absolute majority. Truth Path and the Motherland gained 135 and 133 deputies respectively.

Ms. Ciller's efforts to secure a coalition government between the two right-of-centre parties, her True Path and Mr. Yilmaz's Motherland, failed due to Mr. Yilmaz' refusal to join any government that had Ms. Ciller at its head.

Mr. Yilmaz is now seeking the backing of two smaller left-wing parties and around 20 potential defectors from the True Path Party to form a Motherland-led government, political analysts say.

"Motherland will be making every effort to secure the transfer deputies of from True Path," columnist Gungor Mengi predicted Monday in the Istanbul-based mass circulation daily Sabah.

Another option for Mr. Yilmaz would be to form a coalition with the Islamists since he is the only leader who has not ruled out an alliance with Mr. Erbakan's Welfare.

The main obstacle to a True Path-Motherland coalition supported by the secularists as well as by business circles is the bitter personal feud between Ms. Ciller and Mr. Yilmaz. Each has accused the other of lying, incompetence and corruption.

"Somehow Turkey manages to muddle on," said Sedat Ergin, Ankara bureau chief of the Hurriyet daily.

"We somehow survive," said Mr. Ergin. "The crisis we got through last week was at a time when the Greek government saw a political vacuum in Ankara and a lack of government."

Turkey claimed victory for forcing Greek troops off a disputed cluster of rocks in the Aegean Sea last week after a tense military standoff that ended with U.S. diplomatic intervention.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## King honours Saqqaf and Hlayel

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday conferred Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order upon Mohammad Saqqaf, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's advisor, and Royal Court Imam Ahmad Hlayel in appreciation of their distinguished efforts and services.

## Britons enlisted in Oklahoma bomb defence

LONDON (AFP) — British experts with experience investigating Northern Ireland bombs are being enlisted by lawyers defending a man charged with the bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City last April, a lawyer said Monday. The bomb, which destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building killing 168, is alleged to have been made from fertiliser, using techniques similar to those employed by the Irish Army (IRA). Lawyers defending Timothy McVeigh, 27, on murder and conspiracy charges in connection with the blast have turned to British experts to help them prepare their case. Christopher Murray, of London-based solicitors Kingsley Napley retained by Mr. McVeigh's U.S. lawyers, said U.S. forensic experts lack the experience of their British counterparts because the United States has had limited experience with terrorism.

## Eritrean president visits Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Shimon Peres agreed here Monday to strengthen bilateral ties during a brief stopover in Israel by the African leader. Mr. Afwerki, accompanied by Foreign Minister Petros Solomon and Commerce Minister Okbea Abreha, met Mr. Peres during a four-hour visit. A statement issued by Mr. Peres' office after the meeting said the two leaders had decided "to strengthen their cooperation" in such fields as agriculture and other sectors. Mr. Afwerki also met President Ezer Weizman and Health Minister Ephraim Sneh and was to fly on to Italy later in the day.

## Con artists get away with $720,000 ring

BANGKOK (AFP) — Two foreign con artists spirited away a $720,000 diamond ring from a jewellery shop in central Bangkok, paying just $77 for the beautiful gem, Thai television reported Monday. A hidden closed-circuit camera showed how the two men in business suits, with Middle Eastern features and accents, sauntered into Place Diamant in the basement of the five-star Hyatt Erawan Hotel at midday on Sunday and asked to see the store's finest goods, Channel 7 said. One of the two saleswomen showed them a 14.15-karat "fancy yellow" diamond ring that the shop's head office in Geneva had just sent for an exhibition, and a purchase was agreed, it said. The two men were asked to put up a $10,000 deposit and to pick up the goods in Geneva. The men told the shop to place the ring in a jewellery box, scotch-tape the lid and keep it in the safe-deposit box and then left, it said. An hour later, one of the shopkeepers discovered that the jewellery box was empty — and the envelope had only 77 one dollar notes inside.

# Bahrain says crisis will end soon, aims to attract capital

MANAMA (Agencies) — Bahrain's prime minister said Monday that 14 months of political unrest would end soon and that his country aimed to ensure the right climate for the foreign investment needed to create jobs.

"The crisis which we passed through will be over soon after we took some precautions which ensure the country's and citizens' safety," Sheikh Khalifa Ben Salman Al Khalifa said, according to Information Ministry officials.

Everything in Bahrain is quiet right now," Sheikh Khalifa was quoted as telling the Arabic-language Al Sharq Al Awsat newspaper.

Bahraini authorities reported several arson attacks at the weekend, but there were fewer than in the previous weeks.

Unrest first erupted in December 1994 when the Sunni-led authorities arrested a Shiite Muslim cleric who called for the restoration of parliament, which was suspended in 1975.

"Our priority is to ensure the right climate for investment from the Gulf, Arabs and Westerners to invest in our country and to build new projects which will help us develop our plans and create more jobs," Sheikh Khalifa said.

The government has announced several plans to create more jobs, launch training programmes and hire more Bahrainis in a bid to ease the unemployment which has contributed to the unrest.

An Information Ministry official who asked not to be named said the rioting has had no major effect on the economy. "It affected us but it did not hurt us," he said.

A Western diplomat in Manama said that although a few foreign companies have left the Gulf Arab archipelago, "we have not seen a major exodus of companies."

But be acknowledged there was a long-term threat from the violence. "If it continues at a high enough level, it threatens Bahrain as a commercial centre in the Gulf," he said.

Meanwhile, the Gulf Daily News said the government is studying a proposal to streamline court procedures and speed up rulings, but officials said it was not linked to the mass arrests of activists.

Officials said around 220 people have been arrested this year, including the main opposition leader, Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri, under measures to thwart "criminal and terrorist acts which have recently intensified."

Laweyrs in Bahrain said at least 2,000 people have been imprisoned in the last four weeks amid troubles that followed a government ban on political gatherings at Shiite Muslims mosques.

Sheikh Isa meanwhile thanked Saudi Arabia for its support during the current wave of anti-government protests.

The emir, Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, praised Saudi Arabia's "stand in support of Bahrain's peace and security," the official Gulf News Agency reported.

The agency said Sheikh Isa spoke during a meeting with the editor-in-chief of Al Sharq Al Awsat, which is published in London.

# Liberal Iranian party registers for elections

TEHRAN (AFP) — Seven members of the main liberal opposition group in Iran officially registered on Monday to run in the country's March general elections, for the first time in 16 yeas.

The members of the Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI), an illegal but tolerated group with liberal democratic views, added their names in the presence of journalists to the list of candidates running for seats in the March 8 polls.

Ebrahim Yazdi, LMI's secretary general and a former foreign minister in the eight-month-old interim government which emerged after the 1979 revolution, is among the hopefuls in the liberal camp.

It will be the first time the group has taken part in an election here since its members were sidelined from power by the Shiite Muslim clergy in 1980.

Mr. Yazdi told reporters that the move by the seven was the "first step towards the opposition's participation" in the vote.

"Now it all depends on the decisions of the authorities," he said referring to the Council of the Guardians, a clergy-dominated body tasked with screening the candidates ahead of the election.

"Iran is going through a crucial period and all opposition forces should be represented in parliament."

Abdolali Bazargan and Abolfazl Bazargan, the son and nephew of the late Mehdi Bazargan, Iran's first prime minister after the revolution, are among the seven.

The others are a former mayor of Tehran, Mohammad Tavasoli, former Interior Minister Hashem Sabaghian and university professors Hassan Farid Alam and Gholam-Abbas Tavasoli.

Interior Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati said recently that LMI members would be allowed to run on individual tickets but not for the LMI.

Six other liberal personalities close to LMI also registered to run for the upcoming polls in their own names.

Among them are former Oil Minister Ali Akbar Moinfar, former chief prosecutor Abolfazl Mirshams Shahshabani, a representative of the guild of merchants in Tehran baazar, Mohammad Mohammadi Ardahali, and a physician, Nezameddin Ghahari.

The LMI, founded in 1960 by Mehdi Bazargan, recognises in principle the Islamic republic, but regards the ruling clergy as undemocratic.

Iranian leaders have repeatedly announced in the past weeks that the election would be free and fair and have called for massive participation.

Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry announced Monday that it had ordered the Tehran municipality to remove all campaign advertisements posted in public promoting candidates backed by the moderate faction of the Iranian leadership.

Deputy Interior Minister Ali Reza Tabesh told Iran News daily that no poltical group or independent candidate would be allowed to start its electoral campaign yet.

# Dream turns nightmare for driver who overslept stop

LONDON (AFP) — A British lorry driver is suing an airline after seeing his dream job abroad turn to nightmare when he slept through his stop in the Philippines and flew on to Tokyo, according to press reports Monday.

Stephen Rees, 36, of Bradford, West Yorkshire, heading for a chauffeur's job in Manila, took the scenic route, profitting from an Egypt Air ticket that allowed him stops in Munich, Madrid, New York, Singapore and Bangkok.

But, according to account in the Daily Telegraph and Daily Mail, he fell asleep on the Bangkok-Manila flight and, although his luggage was off-loaded at Manila, no one woke him and he flew on to Tokyo, where his troubles began.

Stranded with £50 ($75) cash and the clothes on his back, Mr. Rees phoned his new Filipino employers to say he would be delayed, and was told the job no longer existed, said his lawyer, John Ryan.

The British consul in Tokyo refused to help, and Mr. Rees slept on a bench at Tokyo Airport before scrounging day labourer work that provided enough for a flight to Seoul.

South Korea deported him to Hong Kong, which sent him back to Seoul, where both he and South Korean immigration officials were less than delighted to see one another again and relations were reduced to fisticuffs.

Korean Air finally agreed to fly Mr. Rees to London's Heathrow airport.

But, dishevelled and bruised from the altercation at Seoul airport, Mr. Rees bore little resemblance to his passport photo and he was grilled for hours by British immigration officers.

On emerging from the Heathrow arrivals lounge, he found that the friend he had phoned from Seoul to meet him had given up and left, and he had to hitch-hike home.

When he protested to Egypt Air that they should have woken him on arrival in Manila, he said: "They told me I shouldn't have fallen asleep and was lucky I wasn't charged for the flight to Tokyo."

# Bashir announces candidacy

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir officially announced on Monday he will run in the country's first presidential elections since he took power in a 1988 coup.

Lieutenant-General Bashir, who dissolved all poltical parties after the bloodless coup which installed his government, invited candidates last month to run for his post in the vote for president and a legislature set for March.

He submitted his candidature application on Monday with the required 20 signatures of support, including names of politicians from the civil war-torn south and from the elected government of Sadeq Al Mahdi, who Gen. Bashir overthrew.

Sources in the electoral commission said a retired police captain, Mohammad Abdullah Osman, had also submitted his candidature.

The commission announced on Sunday the candidatures of Ramadan Shuol, a Muslim from the mostly Christian south and former head of the dissolved Al Salam (peace) party, Abdul Majid Sultan Kaijab, a former swimming champion, and Yassin Hassabalk Jabu, a [illegible] bureaucrat without political experience.

# Kuwait MPs' tactics irritate neighbours

KUWAIT (R) — Sharp-tongued Kuwaiti lawmakers have irritated key allies Bahrain and Saudi Arabia by turning a critical spotlight on alleged imperfections in their internal affairs, diplomats said on Monday.

The spat does not seriously threaten Kuwait's ties with its two neighbours, but it does illustrate the unease some states in the region feel with the outspoken ways of Kuwait's parliament, the only elected Gulf Arab legislature, they said.

Bahrain, trying to end months of pro-democracy protests, was angered when eight prominent Kuwaiti deputies wrote to its ruler, Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, asking him to revive the Bahraini parliament dissolved in 1975.

Al Seyassah newspaper said Manama had responded by banning the deputies from entering its territory. There has been no official comment from either Kuwait or Bahrain on the report.

Saudi officials were perturbed by the inclusion in a parliamentary press digest of a translation of a British newspaper report on alleged wrongdoing by officials in the kingdom, diplomats said.

Saudi officials appeared to understand the article was merely translated by assembly officials, rather than written by them, and no direct criticism by Kuwaitis was involved. But they appeared unhappy it had even been included in the digest of international press comment about the Gulf, diplomats said.

Diplomats said Kuwaiti officials dealing with the tiffs were taking care to clear up any misunderstandings to preserve a network of alliances vital to Kuwait's national security.

The Saudi-dominated Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economic, political and military alliance which includes Bahrain provided support for Kuwait when Iraq invaded in 1990, housing thousands of exiled Kuwaitis and the Kuwaiti government in exile.

The Kuwaiti deputies, a group of opposition Shi'ites, Islamists and liberals, denied they wanted to interfere in Bahrain and said they had not been officially informed of a travel ban.

"It is a human rights issue that we have addressed. This shouldn't cause sensitivities," said Abdul Mohsen Jamal, one of the letter's signatories and a member of parliament's foreign affairs panel. "Human rights issues are international and unlimited," he added.

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## Buddha's birthplace found in Nepal

KATHMANDU (R) — Archaeologists have discovered the birth chamber of Lord Buddha under an ancient temple in south-western Nepal, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba said. An international team of scientists reported finding relics five metres under the Mayadevi Temple in Lumbini, 350 kilometres west of the Himalayan kingdom's capital Kathmandu. "The discovery proves that Lord Buddha was born at this sacred place," Mr. Deuba told tourism developers in Kathmandu. Archaeologists from Nepal, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Japan said they made the discovery nine months ago but the Nepali government delayed making an announcement until it had finished consulting experts. The archaeologists said a triangular case made of bricks and a large stone marked the birthplace of Prince Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism who was born in 623 BC and later called Lord Buddha. Buddha's birthplace has been in dispute, and some experts claim it was in northern India. Nepal plans to turn Lumbini into a major tourist attraction and pilgrimage site, government officials said.

## Diana denies she negotiating divorce

LONDON (R) — Princess Diana denied reports that she had started negotiating a divorce settlement with her husband Prince Charles that included up to £7 million ($10.5 million) for town and country homes. The Mail On Sunday newspaper reported that Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, had agreed to personally bear the cost of a £6 million ($9 million) house in London and a £1 million ($1.5 million) country retreat for Princess Diana. It quoted a "royal source" as saying Princess Diana, who currently resides in London's Kensington Palace, had driven a hard bargain in negotiations over a divorce settlement. But a spokeswoman for Princess Diana said there was no truth in the story. "No negotiations have taken place...and no reliance whatsoever should be placed on the story," she told Britain's Press Association news agency. Prince Charles and Princess Diana separated in 1992 and newspapers have reported in recent weeks that Prince Charles's mother, Queen Elizabeth, had ordered them to divorce. Princess Diana said in a controversial television interview last autumn that she would not seek a divorce but would leave the matter up to Prince Charles.

## Colombian police rescue hostage

BOGOTA (R) — Colombian police rescued a teenager kidnapped from the wedding of his mother and Dutch stepfather and held to ransom for $10 million, a police statement said. The statement said a special anti-kidnap team rescued 16-year-old Oscar Tafur Cotes during a dawn raid on a house in southern Bogota. Police arrested three suspects. The statement said Tafur was abducted from the steps of a Bogota church after the Dec. 16 wedding ceremony of his Colombian mother, Norma Cotes and Aaren Festergen, a Dutchman. Tafur's mother lost her unborn child as a result of the trauma, it said. Colombia has one of the highest kidnapping rates in the world with an average of three abductions a day.